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PARTISAN REVIEW

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MARCH-APRIL, 1943

WARTIME JOURNAL
André Gide

The New Failure of Nerve (2):

RUTH BENEDICT
Human Nature Is Not a Trap

RICHARD V. CHASE
The Huxley-Heard Paradise

NORBERT GUTERMAN
Kierkegaard and His Faith

FAILURE OF THE LEFT
Sidney Hook

To our young pro-consuls of the air, an ode by Allen Tate.

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Journal, 1940

André Gide

Translator's Note. *André Gide's* Journal, *one of the great intellectual documents of our time, has not yet been translated into English. Parts of it have been published from time to time in Paris, and in Gide's seventieth year, shortly before the outbreak of war, it appeared in one volume covering the period from* 1889 *to* 1939. *When the* Nouvelle Revue Française *resumed publication after the defeat, the entries here presented were published in its issues of December* 1940 *and January* 1941. FRANK JONES.

The more French I feel, the more I detest the idea of letting my thought be directed. It would lose all value by enlisting. *Crede expecto!* There are already too many who trim their sails to the prevailing winds. Yet, if I keep silent, it is not from pride; on the contrary, I might say it is from modesty; from uncertainty, in fact. I can, and often do, agree with the multitude, but I cannot accept general assent as evidence of truth. My thought does not have to march lockstep, and though I don't consider it any the more courageous merely for differing and detaching and isolating itself, it is precisely when it differs that it seems most useful to express it. Not that I take any pleasure in this difference—I find it hard to do without sympathy. Nor do the thoughts I share with the majority seem to me any the less important in themselves for being shared. It is just that the more they are shared, the less it matters to say them; whereas the others, if I do not express them, are lost.

"The more one thinks of it, the more one is impressed by this obvious truth: there's no rime or reason in it." (Antoine Thibault). Well! What do you want it to rime *with?*

"Man is a miracle without interest" (Jean Rostand). But what on earth would be needed for this miracle to assume importance in your eyes, for you to consider it worthy of interest?

As for me, the more I think of it, the less I manage to understand you. Sometimes it makes one wonder whether you are not pining for "the Lord in His goodness." It would much more likely be in such a case—on realizing the inadequacy of His goodness, the breakdown of His justice, or His impotence, if I believed in

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Providence—that my cry of despair would break out. I never regret not *believing;* but I am often impelled to say "Fortunately, I do not *believe!*"

"Perhaps truth is sad" (I would like to be sure I am quoting Renan's little sentence accurately, but am ignorant of its source). This *mot,* which throws people into ecstacies, annoys me. Truth cannot be either sad or cheerful. But to wake from a dream, to think oneself God-forsaken because one began by believing in Providence—yes, that can be very distressing at first. The fact that two and two make but four saddens only the man who had fancied that they "made" more.

There is a certain romanticism in grieving because things are not other than they are: than they can be, that is. It is on the real, not the imaginary, that we must build our wisdom. Even death ought to be accepted by us, and we should raise ourselves to the level of understanding it, understanding that the astonishing beauty of death arises precisely from the fact that nothing endures in it, that ceaselessly *this* must yield room and matter to allow *that,* which has not yet been, to come forth; the same, but renewed, rejuvenated; the same, yet imperceptibly nearer the perfection in knowledge for which it strives and from which the very face of God is gradually formed. Ceaselessly in the process of becoming and never completed, from the unthinkable gulf of the past to the unthinkable "consummation of the ages."

Nothing is more irritating and absurd than: "What is anything that is not everlasting?"—when said without irony.

"A fastidious person declared: 'There is no truth except in nuance.' Was he not one of those colorless writers who get lost in the search for a tone when it is impossible for them to reflect the light?" Certainly not! I am pretty sure that the writer was Renan, and I fear that this is a profound misinterpretation of the sentence quoted from him.

This handful of intellectuals uttering their *mea culpa* nowadays, and accusing themselves of having "loved literature too much"—will they never understand how prejudicial to culture is the abandonment and repudiation of certain graces of the spirit? Are we to turn our backs in a "strategic retreat" on everything

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delicate, *nuancé* and subtle that French art has produced? Shall we be told to prefer *La Madelon* to the works of Debussy and Ravel? Neuville and Detaille to Corot? Béranger to Baudelaire, Déroulède to Verlaine . . . (to mention only the dead), for fear of what might unnerve or weaken us?

Our literature is being incriminated these days. People are reproaching it for its refinement, and for having worked to weaken rather than galvanize our energies. Some go as far as to wish we had never had any poets but Borniers and Déroulèdes. . . . Would it not be wiser to realize that every advanced literature, whatever its character, tends to exhaust what produces it? This flower of civilization develops and opens at the expense of the plant, which surrenders, gives, sacrifices itself to the flower. If Germany were in richer bloom, she would have been less strong.

Again I have missed the coming of spring. More than twenty days in bed. Now that I can at last get up and go out, the wisteria has half shed its blossoms already. The strict diet has left me very weak, but all the more sensitive. I have become acquainted with morphine. A trifle disappointed. It quelled the pain well enough when the nephritic crisis grew excessively troublesome, but without contributing any of the paradisiac effects I had anticipated. (Rouveyre explains to me that it always behaves this way when you set a task for it and absorb its energies by giving it sufferings to clear away: that it plays real tricks only when idle.) If I do not let the craving for tobacco get hold of me again, if I have sense enough to profit by the impetus gained through forced abstinence from smoking, so as to rid myself of this silly vice, which has gradually become an imperious need, I shall not have paid too dearly for my deliverance.

Another bondage I would like very much to shake off: the "unpunished vice," reading—or at least the acquired habit of reading all the time and everywhere, never letting my thought roam guideless and companionless.

What, indeed, do I expect of a book today? What last enrichment? Instruction? Somewhat vain henceforth; for at my age *les jeux sont faits*. Entertainment? Probably not so much that as simple distraction. Yes, in reading I endeavor to distract

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myself from myself, and although I really ought to be concentrating my thoughts, I seem to welcome, almost without distinction, anything that can help me forget myself. And this vague scattering of my thoughts, which diverts me from all real work, soothes and encourages a certain smug laziness. For though I fear to leave my mind unoccupied, and keep bringing it new nourishment from without, I know, too, that it produces nothing good without effort. But it would be better still to give it a complete holiday, instead of continually interposing a screen between it and God. I must learn solitude again.

But no, events are too serious; I pay attention only to them. . . .

Yesterday the countryside was decked in a thousand charms, "as in the loveliest days." The air was light, the sky inexpressibly pure. A mildness, the more exquisite for having been so long awaited, seemed to invite all creatures to glow with joy. Why put my sentences in the past tense? This morning the same splendor reigns; it makes one wonder if the ghastly shadow cast by the war on all our thoughts is a trick of fancy.

And this night everything is rapt, seemingly ecstatic in the brightness of a moon almost at the full. Roses and lilacs mingle their scents. The forest depths are starred with fireflies. I think of all those for whom this night, so lovely, is the last, and I would like to be able to pray for them. But I understand even more clearly what the words "to pray for someone" signify; or rather I know that they no longer express anything for me. They are words I have carefully emptied of all meaning. But my heart is swollen with love.

From a sense of propriety, I concern myself in this notebook only with what does not relate to the war; and that is why, throughout so many days, I write nothing in it. Those are the days when I cannot find release from anguish, cannot think of anything but *that.*

This, which seems to me a truism, I wrote and am ready to write again: "With fine feelings one makes bad literature." I

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never said or thought that good literature is made only with bad feelings. I could just as well have written that the best intentions often make the worst works of art and that the artist risks degrading his art if he tries to make it edifying. I am careful not to add "always": the example of Péguy deters me from that. But, apart from the fact that I find his oft-quoted verses on Eve very mediocre, I hold that those who admire them are leaving the domain of art and taking up quite a different point of view: that of the priest or the major-general is not likely to coincide, except incidentally, with that of the artist.

For all that, a literature can be more or less virile and virilifying, and in recent times ours, as a whole, has not been so at all. It had other qualities, which it stands in peril of losing if, perforce or at some password, it tries to make up its lacks by artifice and forces out sounds that are utterly against its nature. No reason of the movement will lead me to prefer (for example) Zola's *Travail* or *Récondité* to his *Pot-Bouille.* It is possible that for a time the art of Clodion or Carpeaux may be less popular than that of Rude or Barie, but to try to assess art on its moral output is a perversion of judgment.

Indulgence. Indulgences. . . . That puritan rigor for which the protestants, those hinderers of dancing, have often made themselves so detestable: those conscientious scruples, that intransigent integrity, that unbending punctuality. . . . This is what we lacked most. Softness, casualness, relaxation in charm and ease—and as many likeable qualities, which were to lead us blindfolded to defeat.

And, most frequently, mere ignoble slackness, flabbiness.

Les Ronds de Cuir, which I have just tried to reread, has plunged me into unspeakable dumps. "It's like Daumier," people tell me. No, no! Daumier was satire. Daumier castigated what Courteline seems to be pleased with, to have fun with. He delights in abjectness, takes sides with the swindler, the pickpocket. What can one expect of so mediocre a humanity—alas, only too accurately painted! An approving, indulgent portrait, in which so many Frenchmen recognize themselves—or, at least, one recognizes so many Frenchmen.

Melancholy reign of indulgence, indulgences. . . .

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Oh yes, I laugh with Courteline, uncontrollably sometimes; but, the laugh extinguished, nothing remains but despair.

I read, in the first of Gobineau's *Etudes Critiques*: "Whatever may be said against our century [written in 1844] its higher literature can show names like Béranger, Lamennais, George Sand, Hugo, Lamartine: with glories such as these an age may go astray, but it cannot be justly said to have lost the sense of art."

On the contrary, such a judgment shows to what a degree this "sense" had been lost; for Gobineau is here merely reproducing the opinions of his time. He is not informing us of personal tastes; the three first names he cites, the first especially, enjoyed universal esteem. Goethe repeatedly speaks in dithyrambic terms of Béranger, which makes us wonder if we in our turn are not being unjust, and if there is really nothing left of a body of work that seemed so praise-worthy in those days. I recently went through nearly all Béranger's *Chansons* again, and found nothing that did not impress me as vulgar, banal and repulsive. Does this mean that our period has better taste? Or simply different taste? The question arises whether there are not several writers paraded by us today, several artists accorded the majority vote, from whom the coming generation will turn away, astonished at our error.

In Renan's time the tendency was to think the most "serious" literature the most enduring—which showed a high degree of folly. But are our preferences any clearer-sighted? And will they not provide just as much for tomorrow to smile at?

A glorious morning, radiant sky. The mountain opposite shimmers in luminous azure. The countryside with its blond wheat bathes in peace and joy, and all the birds tell of it, drunk with sun. Amid so much serenity I cannot manage to feel very gloomy; besides, I am not anxious to, and I think that in mourning also it is bad to force the note. Effort should be devoted to action; in sensation or feeling it falsifies everything. The speeches I heard yesterday are evidence of that.

It is not given to many Frenchmen to feel the country's great grief, or to feel it constantly. Private sufferings are more immediately felt; and mostly it is the bother of restrictions, even the

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discomfort of exile, and fear of tomorrow's scarcities. Those who are capable of being genuinely moved for intellectual reasons, of suffering from non-material lacks, are very rare. And perhaps it is better that this should be the case.

One needs a good deal of imagination—and that of the rarest kind, the reasoning kind—to visualize the remote consequences of a defeat, and the ways in which each person may suffer under it. Solidarity among all the citizens of a country is still rather wobbly, in France at any rate, and not *felt* much; it remains something abstract; and to very many people it has very little actuality. It would have been a question, not of creating it exactly, but of inculcating a sense of it in the populace and the school-children; but teachers had other programs, and were themselves much more interested in the "class struggle," which, from the selfish point of view, apparently yielded results that were more immediate, surer, and more "obvious"—or so it seemed.

A retrogression, an effacement or at least an escape into mysticism, into lofty values—this, I fear, we shall have to witness. It will be at once the most burdensome and the most imperceptible item in the "account rendered."

Moreover, patriotic emotion is no more constant than our other loves—which, on certain days, if one is to be quite honest about it, amount to very little indeed; but one seldom dares to acknowledge the littleness of the place they hold in our hearts on such occasions.

"And the resurrection of the body," says the Church, which knows how deeply the soul needs to fall in love, and that if the Word had not been "made flesh" it would have few adorers. Imagine them prostrate before a triangle! We are ineluctably sunk in matter, and even our most mystical loves cannot dispense with material images. The contemplation of the Virgin supports and provokes the ecstasy which would relapse without some concrete sign to hold on to. We need symbols—monuments, statues, flags—to give some foothold to emotion, perches where that may come to rest which soars in our hearts but could not keep flying long. We can no more do without them than language can do without metaphors. Pious emotion invents or adopts a gesture to express itself; then it slips away from under the gesture, and

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soon the gesture stands in its stead. This keeps the lapses and vacancies of our sensibility from being too obvious.

Even Carco (*Figaro*, Sept. 21) hymns the return to the land. It is what Barrès would have called "falling back on our minima." It would be foolish to deny that this "return" is necessary and fated. But I am distressed by the blindness of those who fancy that it will make possible all by itself the revival of France, and see in this falling back a promise of renewal. I see in it nothing but recoil and resignation.

It is doubtless good and wise to be resigned when one has no alternative; and I myself am not at all inclined to rebellion. But it is bad not to be clear-sighted and not to understand what this "return to the land" means.

"Investigate what is, not what is convenient," said Goethe, wisely. In order not to have to falsify one's thought, it may become advisable to keep it quiet; in this case the greatest sufferers will be those who have not yet spoken.

To convince myself that advance is a vain hope at my time of life would be the worst clouding-over of old age. Rest in contemplation is not for me; I cannot put up with it. I enjoy life only when active and intent . . . intent on what? Ye gods! . . . Oh, simply self-development.

Zu wild, zu bang ist's ringsum, und es
*Trümmert und wankt ja, wohin ich blicke.**

But, in my interior skies, the same constellations are shining; otherwise I would be at a loss to understand why I do not feel the gloomier for having to navigate in uncertainty and beneath this disastrous European sky.

Of the pages I have written lately, and have just re-read for the first time, I now feel attached only to those not directly related to events, those it seems I might just as well have written at any other period. It is only in its untimely element that thought can remain valid: in that which circumstances, no matter how adverse, will be unable to modify.

*Too wild, too gloomy is the world about me; it totters and falls in ruins wherever I look. (Hölderlin).

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May 1940. I never wrote anything except in joy; and at moments I doubt whether there is a single spark of it left in my heart.

Of what am I in any condition to speak with genuine competence? On any topic whatever, my first and foremost feeling is my own inadequacy.

On certain days—or rather at certain hours of every day (I speak of these latest times) I feel as remote from my books as if they were the work of someone else. Even though my thought can still dwell in them, I would be incapable of writing them today. Also, their successful execution demanded a constancy of spirit which I no longer possess.

Each morning I read a few pages of Eckermann, with perceptible profit. These *Conversations* are inexhaustible in resources. One does not encounter in them sublime or startling utterances; it is a continuous rippling of attractive wisdom; on the whole, quite like that of Montaigne, which does not so much uplift the soul as temper it, yet never subdues it.

The image of man that Goethe leaves us is exemplary; I mean that on that model one would like to live and think.

Only the *Conversations* manage to distract my thought from the ordeal a little. At any other time I would note many reservations, some of them vital. Today, under date February 12, 1829, I come across a passage in which Goethe contrasts the first line of a recent poem: *Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen* (No entity can crumble to nothing) with that of a piece of verse he now declares absurd: one it annoyed him to see engraved by his Berlin friends in letters of gold over the entrance to a natural history museum: "*Denn alles mag zu nichts zerfallen, Wenn es im Sein beharren will*" (For everything may crumble to nothing if it wants to cling to existence)—teaching that to me seems much more profound, almost akin to that of the Gospel. But as Goethe came close to death he moved further and further from the shadow, instead of trying to cross it to attain supreme clarity. Similarly, he rejected all concern with metaphysics, and his compulsive wish

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for "more light" grew more and more pressing. This brought in its train an attenuation of his thought.

. . . All those ruinous chimeras! Now we see their price. We will have to pay for all the absurdities of the sacrosanct treaty of Versailles, the humiliations, the useless vexations that stirred my temper in 1919, though it was depressingly vain to protest against them; and our undignified abuse of victory. Now it is their turn to abuse.

What a fine lack of psychology we demonstrated in our day of infatuation by triumph! As though the wisest move were not to lend the loser a hand, to help him get up instead of exerting our ingenuity to prostrate him further, absurdly, without realizing that we were thereby tautening his rancors and stiffening his energies. But, when it is a question of politics, who can be convinced that generosity need not always be a dupe's emotion?

Is there still anyone with whom it gives me real pleasure to converse? I can no longer affirm anything without feeling that somehow the affirmation violates my thought. Not one of my convictions is so firm that the slightest objection cannot shake it; besides, other people's affirmations usually seem to me hollow and just as unsure as mine. More and more I fear that an idea may impress me as correct simply because it is well formulated.

As for the immediate situation, the time has not yet come for "making a pronouncement." At the moment I feel within me only waiting, and hope. . . . I do not yet know for what.

July. After long feeding on *Faust 2*, I take up Part I again, and find that I knew it less well, although I had read it many times. How many beauties I still find in it! What abundance! It is drenched with life. Thought never appears there abstractly, but in animation; just as its feeling is never disjunct from thought, so that its particularizations are charged with meanings and, so to speak, exemplary. Goethe attains sublime regions so naturally that one always feels at ease there in his company.

Temperate and reasonable though he is, and strives to be, it is in the unexplained, the unexplainable, and what he would call the demonic that I find him greatest. I like the fact that,

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conversing with Eckermann and urged by him to comment on the role of "the mothers" in *Faust 2*, and explain just what meaning he attributed to them, Goethe drew back, sheltering from too logical and rational a search those shadowy regions on which his personal wisdom fell back and from which his thought took soaring flight. If "the shudder" is, as Goethe says, the best in man, is it not also the best in Goethe? In face of this wisdom, how Voltaire's stops short! And how his mind impoverishes art, life, culture by sweeping them clean of "the shudder!"

Hotel des Bains, Ginoles. Under my window a huge plane-tree—certainly one of the loveliest trees I have ever seen. I admire at length its enormous trunk, its mighty ramification, and the balance in which it is maintained by the weight of its most important branches. The contemplation of an immemorial tree is as restful in effect as that of large pachyderms, so strongly advocated by Butler.

My heart has been restored and re-inflated from another source, too: the splendid D-major concerto of Mozart, masterfully interpreted by Wanda Landowska, played just now on the radio, from records.

Strength and warmth, grace, wit, tenderness—nothing is wanting in this work (which I recognize note by note) or in the perfect playing of the pianist, whom I reproach myself for not having heard more often.

The only art that appeals to me starts from restlessness and tends toward serenity.

To love truth is to refuse to let oneself be depressed by it.

At my age it is doubtless rather silly to seek instruction, and I suppose the whole effort is vain; but as soon as I stop being intent on something I get bored, and cease to enjoy life. And yet I keep telling myself that the contemplative state, pure and simple, is what it would be fitting to attain, and do one good to go to sleep in. . . . My spirit is not yet assuaged enough for that; still too inquisitive, too greedy.

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Read and reread much Goethe lately: some poems, the fine introduction to *The Theory of Color*, and, impelled by Eckermann's admiration of it, the *Novelle*, an incredibly silly performance. Goethe could not have written it in our day; to be sure, in the sphere of art one cannot speak of progress, but he would have understood that only the specific particularity of notations can maintain interest in this kind of story, where everything is invented, contrived "as you like it," and to prove—what? That gentleness gets further than violence? That the wildest forces of nature become servants when tamed? That poetry and music prevail over the most intractable instincts? That a child's trustful naiveté triumphs where brutality fails? Obviously; but the greatest triumph here is that of artifice. A work of art is not brought into being by the mere application of sound rules; further, the ones Goethe puts to work in this little tale are highly questionable. Today Goethe would blush, too, for many of his reflections on painting, as transmitted by Eckermann. The arts have evolved in a manner he could not foresee, and there have been very great painters whose whole work goes to refute his theories. It is amusing to note that in several other spheres too the most profitable trails have been blazed in directions where he presaged nothing but blind alleys. A further point, a vital one: all his intelligence, though so spontaneously investigative, did not prevent him from thinking that he ought to avert his curiosity from what he considered human intelligence would never be able to reach (Heavens! what a complicated sentence! but no more so than the thought) and what it therefore seemed to him vain to inquire into: astronomy, prehistory, all problems concerning origins, first formations. . . . Several of the high questions he refused to put to himself, in fear, and dread of disappointment, are among those in which the mind has since risked its boldest ventures and reaped the most prodigious reward.

Will it be said that France had ceased to be the great nation whose part she was still playing? Even so, I see no other nation on earth that could take over that part today. This is what we must convince her of, convince ourselves of.

If, as is to be feared, freedom of thought, or at least freedom

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to express thought, is denied us tomorrow, I shall try to persuade myself that art and even thought will lose less thereby than in an excess of liberty. . . . We are entering a period in which liberalism will become the most suspect and least practicable of virtues. But I try to persuade myself that it is in illiberal epochs that the free spirit attains its highest excellence.

If I sense unlimited potentialities of acceptance in myself, it is because they do not in any way involve the essential being. Thought runs far worse risks in allowing itself to be dominated by hate. As for restricting my comforts, my pleasures, I am ready. To tell the truth, my aging body has little use for them. Perhaps things would be different if I were twenty. I think that today young people are to be pitied more than old men.

August. Dr. Cailleux lends me a *Revue de Paris* in which I enjoy reading an excellent article by Thérive on Zola, which I would willingly countersign, and an essay on Germany, signed XXX, which gives me a little satisfaction. Instead of expounding to us the faults that led the German people to victory, would it not be timely to denounce the eminent qualities that earned the French their defeat (a defeat which will perhaps not permit these qualities to manifest themselves again)? I speak ironically, for neither our qualities nor our virtues can be held accountable for our defeat; but many ruinous faults which were, so to speak, their reverse, their ransom, and which we are still far from undertaking to correct.

It is true that "the Frenchman" is more often motivated by the need of perfection than any other modern people; but the sense of the perfect is inseparable from the idea of moderation, and consequently from limitation (*Was künstlich ist, verlangt geschlossenen Raum**), so that this very perfection necessarily involves, in art, a certain compactness, even a contraction (much more apparent than profound, be it said) of the zone and scope of thought. And it was also an invitation to a rapid sclerosis, against which the extraordinary sallies of romanticism and of so many potent personalities—in painting as well as in literature—were a protest.

It is equally true that Germany, less of a designer than a

*What is artistic demands a closed space. (Goethe).

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musician (the reflections I set down on this topic more than twenty years ago still seem to me the most apt), delights in the vagueness of immoderation. And this need of restless expansion, of evasion into the unformulated, the formless, swiftly glides toward the desire of conquest, as we have seen to our cost. What remains to be seen is whether this brusque breaking out of bounds, this immoderate expansion, is compatible with the balance of an organism.

Read some Saint-Evremond, with delight; then took up again, as I do almost every year, Chateaubriand's *Mémoirs d'Outre-Tombe,* always rediscovering the same grounds for admiring the impressive writer and being exasperated by the actor who keeps setting himself off to advantage and never stumbles or makes a false move. As he is continually preoccupied with the effect he claims to be producing, the meaning of his words and gestures is restricted to this effect alone. My zest for life would vanish if life were no more than this vainglorious parade with a constant foretaste of death. It goes without saying that religion finds no trouble in settling on this dreadful vacancy, this *taedium vitae;* the cross finds it no trouble to raise itself aloft when it is *Spes Unica.* Finally, this passion for tombs, this endless memorializing, these recollections of an extinct past, a poetics that yawns and stretches over everything, make me applaud even more warmly the praises of forgetting history so finely sung by Nietzsche in the second of his *Untimely Observations.*

November. As soon as I had finished *Lotte in Weimar,* an excellent book which held all my interest for two weeks, I reread *Werther,* not without annoyance. I did not remember that he took so long to die. It goes on and on, until one feels like giving him a push. Four or five times, what one hoped would be his final sigh is succeeded by another even more ultimate. . . . Departures with frills exasperate me.

Then, to soothe and reward my mind (for I read German only with effort and trouble), I leave German for English. Every time I dip into English literature again, it is with delight. What variety! What abundance! This is the literature whose disappearance would most impoverish humanity.

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December. I ought at least to have dated (and left in chronological order) the leaves from my Journal which I have just reread in the latest number of the N.R.F. My state of mind is no longer the one that prompted them: a mood still overwhelmed by the defeat. Moreover, my reflections on the exhaustions and lapses of patriotic emotion no longer seem to me very fair. There is nothing like adversity to restore cohesion and vigor to it. Like all contested loves, that of one's country is fortified in trouble, and hammering hardens it. Even solidarity, the perception and awareness of which were dwindling in a dispersion of egoisms, reforms and informs itself almost suddenly in face of the common trial. And this straightening of the bowed spirit stands a good chance of becoming inspiring. Could it be that defeat has at last aroused our virtues?

(*Translated by Frank Jones*)

★★

CONTRIBUTORS

ANDRE GIDE, according to a recent report, left Vichy France for Tunis a few months before the Germans took that city. . . . ALLEN TATE, now living at Monteagle, Tenn., is at work on a new novel. . . . NORBERT GUTERMAN is co-author of *La Conscience Mystifiée,* published in Paris (1936). He has been living in this country for a number of years and is now an American citizen. . . . RICHARD V. CHASE is a member of the English department at Columbia University. . . . RUTH BENEDICT is the author of *Patterns of Culture* and other anthropological works. . . . SIDNEY HOOK is chairman of the department of philosophy at New York University. His study of the hero's role in history will appear shortly. . . . MARY McCARTHY, who was at one time on the editorial staff of PARTISAN REVIEW, published a novel last year. . . . ARTHUR BERGER has written musical criticism for *Modern Music, The New Republic* and other periodicals. . . . LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY is a young poet and fiction-writer now living in Georgia. . . . ALEX COMFORT is among the most active of the younger English poets. . . . F. W. DUPEE teaches English at Columbia University. . . . LOUISE BOGAN is poetry critic of the *New Yorker* and author of several volumes of verse. . . . ROBERT FITZGERALD, who is on the staff of *Time* magazine, has published a volume of poetry and several translations of Greek plays. . . . FRANCIS FERGUSSON teaches drama at Bennington College. . . . GEORGE ANTHONY is a poet who lives in Boston.

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Allen Tate

ODE

To Our Young Pro-Consuls of the Air

Once more the country calls
From sleep, as from his doom,
  Each citizen to take
  His modest stake
Where the sky falls
With a Pacific boom.

Warm winds in even climes
Push southward angry bees
  As we, with tank and plane,
  Wrest land and main
From yellow mimes,
The puny Japanese.

Boys hide in lunging cubes
Crouching to explode,
  Beyond Atlantic skies,
  With cheerful cries
Their barking tubes
Upon the German toad.

Marvelling day by day
Upon the human kind,
  What might I have done
  (A poet alone)
To balk or slay
These enemies of mind?

I sought by night to foal
Chimeras into men—
  Decadence of power
  That, at late hour,
Untimed the soul
To live the past again:

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Toy sword, three-cornered hat
At York and Lexington—
  While *Bon-Homme* whipped at sea
  This enemy
Whose roar went flat
After George made him run;

Toy rifle, leather hat
Above the boyish beard—
  And in the Blue renown
  The Gray went down,
Down like a rat,
And even the rats cheered.

In a much later age
(Europe had been in flames)
  Proud Wilson yielded ground
  To franc and pound,
Made pilgrimage
In the wake of Henry James.

Where Lou Quattorze held *fête*
For sixty thousand men,
  France took the German sword
  But later, bored,
Opened the gate
To Hitler at Compiegne.

In this bad time no part
The poet took, nor chance:
  He studied Swift and Donne,
  Ignored the Hun,
While with faint heart
Proust caused the fall of France.

Sad day at Oahu
When the Jap beetle hit!
  Our Proustian retort
  Was Kimmel and Short,

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Old women in blue;
And then the beetle bit.

It was defeat, or near it!
Yet all that feeble time
  Brave Brooks and lithe MacLeish
  Had sworn to thresh
Our flagging spirit
With literature made Prime!

Cow Creek and bright Bear Wallow,
Nursing the *blague* that dulls
  Spirits grown Eliotic,
  Now patriotic
Are: we follow
The Irresponsibles!

Young men, Americans!
You go to win the world
  With zeal pro-consular
  For our whole star—
You partisans
Of Liberty unfurled!

O animal excellence,
Take pterodactyl flight
  Fire-winged into the air
  And find your lair
With cunning sense
On some Arabian bight

Or sleep your dreamless sleep
(Reptilian bomber!) by
  The Mediterranean
  And like a man
Swear you to keep
Faith with imperial eye:

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Take off, O gentle youth,
And coasting India
  Scale crusty Everest
  Whose mythic crest
Resists your truth;
And spying far away

Upon the Tibetan plain
A limping caravan,
  Dive, and exterminate
  The Lama, late
Survival of old pain.
Go kill the dying swan!

George Anthony

CE MONSTRE DELICAT

Despair is rich, sufficient
to sweeten the streaked ice
of morning. The brass echo
foretells deficiencies.
The cavities are canine.
Despair is hot, will spice
our memories. Let childhood
die with the dice who play
among our attic lores
grown sinister and wild.
Despair redecorates
the room in which we shave
our stories. The prodigal
will lapidate the whore's
grave on Easter day.
Despair comes to unfold
cold innocence. Willows
give brooks their interest
in Spring. Milkweed beds
jewels behind the barn.
The little ones will grow.

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HUSKING BEE

Didactic eyes — furred
light rings foxed
in fear — melt to
geraniums boxed
under the trespassing word.
Such follies bloom! Be thou
the gander. Words
work the bridegroom;
the red ear mocks
the hand of the shuckster.
Shy as a vixen
she turns; her smile
repents. O fly
away, my lady; burr
your optic instrument.
From rented cornfield bring
to crib the corn,
the hand remembering
the ribald cornsilk
fiddle to the harvest horn.

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The New Failure of Nerve, Part II

Neither-Nor

Norbert Guterman

MELANCHOLY COMBINED with irony is the dominant mood of Soren Kierkegaard's character. His tragic and enigmatic figure inevitably recalls, as he was the first to note, the figure of Hamlet. In his youth he was obsessed by a sense of inherited sin, having been thrown into a violent crisis upon learning the cause of his father's "silent despair" (his father saw in the death of his wife and four children a fit punishment for his cursing God when a child and for his seduction of Soren's mother before marrying her). An all-pervasive feeling of "inner misfortune" led Soren to break off his engagement to Regine Olsen, and to avoid explaining his behavior he simulated unfaithfulness. In his relations with people he often hid his distress under a mask of gaiety. His writings were published mostly under pseudonyms; and living on his father's capital, he painfully realized that he "was not a man," that a "life of the understanding" was not a "complete human life." He died in 1855, at the age of forty-two, while engaged in a duel against the state-church, the official Christianity which he declared usurped the place of true religion.

The real event in Kierkegaard's life is his spiritual development. It is an endless progression and self-probing. In many of his essays and discourses a religious terminology is employed; but for him the religious is the subjective, that which expresses the individual's inmost inwardness. As an analyst of the soul he is equal to the most profound. No one is quicker to detect an inner distress, a disappointment, a secret gnawing of conscience under the masks of complacency, meanness or theatrical pose. In his treatment of the unconscious he at times anticipates Freud, being especially bent upon elucidating the in-between states of mind: irony and humor, anxiety, despair, musical pleasure. Some

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religious mystics have plunged into the "night"; Kierkegaard is unequaled in painting the twilight of the soul. He is also a master of expression. There is doubtless an element of unpleasantness in his style, a shade of the baroque and the provincial; but his voice has a wide range; now dramatically hoarse, now angelically tender, it is always feverish and tense, and he always speaks as if he were saying his last words. Kierkegaard never writes merely to explain an idea to an anonymous audience. He wants to persuade more than to explain, and to stir one's innermost being more than to persuade. Yet to attain that end he uses not appeals to sentiment but casuistic reasoning and polemics. His meanings are difficult to grasp not only because of their inherent complexity, but also because his most important works were written in the hope that his fiancée would read *them* and understand *him*. His images, figures or Biblical myths always contain a private reference as a subsidiary meaning; a close analysis is required to understand their full import.

Kierkegaard's objective is to solve the "riddle of life." What preoccupies him is the problem of the individual: how should a man live? What must a man do to realize his individuality in its uniqueness, to lead a life acceptable to him, a life of concrete meaning which, moreover, is not dissolved in conformity? Kierkegaard conceives the problem in the form of an alternative: his fundamental attitude is the "either — or." The individual in quest for the significance and purpose of living is constantly called upon to "choose" one way as opposed to another. But at the same time, Kierkegaard strongly feels that man must not "be this or that, but must be himself." At the very outset there is a tension between two contradictory postulates in Kierkegaard's thinking, which makes him run through a series of interpretations of his alternative, in the quest of an "or" which is absolutely secure against its "either." Merely the halting points in this restless speculation, Kierkegaard's principal "categories" can be here briefly outlined.

The first choice to be made is that between the "esthetical" life, simply following one's instincts, and the "ethical" life, conforming to a social pattern. On the one hand there is the "seducer," Don Juan who tries to attain the absolute by the indefinite re-

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newal of sensation. His method defeats itself: love is killed in the instant of possession; the individual's autonomy, his very identity are lost in a state of perpetual transition. On the other hand there is the "husband," who gives up transient sensation for constancy of will. His inwardness is externalized, his personality raised to the level of the general rule; he becomes a part of visible history.

But Hamlet cannot be Laërtes; the individual cannot be entirely turned inside out. "The exceptional has nothing whatsoever to do with ethics." A new alternative arises: that between the esthetical-ethical mixture symbolized by "marriage," and the life of the "exceptional" wherein the individual is in absolute relation to the Absolute, or God. The domain of the religious is thus reached; the task is now to determine the meaning of the religious in its purest form.

First of all, the man of faith must as such give up communication with the outside world. If the relation with God could be communicated, it would fall under the general rule, it would not longer be the "exceptional" and strictly individual. It is therefore ineffable. Acts like Abraham's sacrifice of his only son (read: Kierkegaard's sacrifice of his love to Regine) must remain incomprehensible to the world, they are beyond the ordinary conceptions of good and evil. Faith is silent. Faith is also "fear and trembling": for God is the Unknown, and in his search for the Absolute, man is never sure of being on the right path. Further, faith is also suffering: to reach God, man must negate the world, destroy the self as finite, "die to immediacy." And even self-denial and suffering are not sure signs of faith. For the "religious" as well as the "demoniac" break the general rule; there is always a chance that religious dread is but a neurotic compensation, and religious inwardness, narcissism. An ambiguous hovering between fear and desire, an anxiety mixed with a deep feeling of guilt, are inseparable from faith. Religious life is the dangerous life: "God is the most fearful enemy of man, the mortal enemy."

But God is also love; and God as majesty must be reconciled with God as love. Here Kierkegaard introduces his most original religious category: "Repetition," or, more accurately, "Recovery." The doctrine that the just will be rewarded in heaven, he explains, is not justice—it is "mere" logic. Resignation transforms the

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present into the past, and Kierkegaard would not be satisfied with only a Proustian "recovery" of the past. Having sacrificed all, the man of faith now demands complete restitution, not in heaven, but on earth, here and now. Rationally the demand is impossible; but God can do the impossible; in relation to this world, God is precisely this "Paradox," this "Scandal." Abraham has renounced Isaac without any hope for his return, but not his love for Isaac (again it is Kierkegaard and his fiancée), and in anguish calls for his restitution. It is granted him because he has faith (but Kierkegaard's fiancée was not returned to him; he therefore thinks that his renunciation had not been an act of faith but of "despair"). "The knight of faith is a man truly happy who possesses all finitude," and thus solves Don Juan's problem. His possession is a higher kind of possession, one that does not kill love; "recovery" is lucid instinct, timeless time, eventful eternity, "immediacy *after* reflection." The lost unity of human life is thus re-established by faith, "by virtue of the absurd."

Kierkegaard attempts to realize the individual outside all accepted forms, spiritual or social. In his opinion, philosophy, morality, institutions leave the problems of concrete existence unsolved. It was in the name of the "concrete" that he attacked Hegelianism, the official philosophy of his period, and his arguments against Hegel are still valid against all modern versions of rationalism. He saw that Hegel's method solved the contradictions of actual life in an illusory and apologetic manner. The abstract thinker, "man in general," left real man in the lurch, sacrificing him to the "world spirit." "Precisely because abstract thinking is *sub specie aeternitatis* it abstracts from the concrete," said Kierkegaard. "If abstract thinking is the highest, it follows that scientists and thinkers walk proudly out of existence, leaving us, common men, with the worst burdens. . . . Abstract thinking kills me as a separate individual and then makes me immortal." And he added ironically: "The being with which thought is identical should no doubt call itself not-being-a-man." What Hegel had done in theory was accomplished in social practice by a society that was "revolutionary, but without passion." that "instead of culminating in a revolution, weakened the inner reality of human relations in a stream of concepts that changed nothing and only made existence itself wholly ambiguous." Even worse than Hegel-

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ianism was its popularized form, current in 1840's (the reformist theories of the Young Germany movement, for instance) which smugly assumed that all important matters could be settled around conference tables and through gradual improvements.

Kierkegaard criticised official religion as vehemently as he criticised official philosophy. The established church—"shallow worldliness" or "hypocritical sanctimoniousness"—is proclaimed to be worse than paganism: "It has transformed God of the spirit into ridiculous twaddle," it "makes God an imbecile." Not Christianity but "profit" is its "truth." "From clergymen one often hears the objection" that it is impossible for them to "live on nothing"; Kierkegaard replies that "this trick is precisely what the clergymen perform: Christianity is nothing and they live on it." Declare the death of Christianity, he demands, rather than continue with this disgusting comedy—either - or.

II

Now, assuredly Job is eternally right as against Hegel, let alone his shallow disciples. Job, Kierkegaard and his follower Leon Shestov point out, refused to be comforted by the moral platitudes of his friends, insisting that what he had lost be restored to him. But was restitution actually made? Did God give back that which had been taken? Did Kierkegaard really overcome abstract thinking and attain the reality of concrete existence.

Fortunately for the professors, philosophers, moralists and priests, who for two thousand years have enjoyed the privilege of preaching the exact opposite of what they practiced, it turns out that Kierkegaard was by no means such a monster, so morbid and reprobate, as actually to live his thought. For though presenting the demand for a life equal to one's "thinking," he met that demand in a manner which far from interfering with the traditional habits of professors, philosophers, moralists and priests, provides a new justification for them. The existence into which he invites them to plunge is not so far from "thinking" after all! It is only a kind of theoretical existence. It turns out that Kierkegaard was not so vulgar as to succeed in his quest, and that one can be a Kierkegaardian without trying to change either oneself or the world. In his *Journal* Kiergegaard himself expressed the fear that his "intellectual capital" would be inherited by "that

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figure so enormously distasteful to me, who up till now has always inherited and will continue to inherit all good things: the don, the professor. . . . And even if the don were to come across this it would not stop him, it would not have the effect of making his conscience prick him, no, this too would be taught. . . ." The irony is that Kierkegaard was an accomplice of the dons he hated for their use of him as a shield against real life. For his life and thinking as they stand before us are too equivocal to point definitely in any one direction. Seeking for the absolute, he achieved a dialectical hovering, an ambiguous progress. In volume after volume of diaries and notes—as though it were possible to overcome a situation by merely being aware of it—he tried to express himself completely, and yet the best he can hope for is to remain a secret to his commentators. His concept of individuality is equivocal to the core: he begins by rejecting natural and social life in the name of the individual's autonomy; he ends by leading the individual into total isolation to a point where, in his own words, it becomes "easy (for the individual) to obey." His religious radicalism was always accompanied by complete political quietism. The content of his demand for individual freedom is revealed to be absolute obedience.

That Kierkegaard's "existence" is nothing more than an *idea* of existence is evident from the development of his doctrine. The modern "existential" philosophers inspired by him appear under close analysis to practice the same abominations with regard to existence which they denounce in the rationalists. Like the rationalists, they accept and sanction the dualism expressed in such oppositions as Reason-Faith, Theory-Practice, Knowledge-Instinct, Real-Ideal, Essence-Existence. They accuse the rationalists of sacrificing the second terms of these oppositions to the first; but they themselves sacrifice the first terms to the second, thereby giving up the possibility of an adequate solution. The rationalist position, they tell us, implies that change is unreal and negates the historicity and irremediable nature of existence, since it subordinates these properties of being to eternity and logic; but the existentialists demand "repetition," and while admitting that this cannot come about without the supernatural, their very demand likewise implies the unreality of change and the negation of

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historicity. They refuse to "repair" existence by means of logic, but they do not shrink from healing it with the "absurd." In rationalist philosophies "law" and "science" are often confused with "inevitability" and "necessity"; this, say the existentialists, leads to resignation and apologetics. But existentialists conceive of human unhappiness as fate, and as Benjamin Fondane showed in detail in *La Conscience Malheureuse*, their attack on reason for preaching resignation is itself an appeal for men to be resigned. It is true that the existentialists do not walk out of existence proudly—like the Hegelians—they walk out of it dejectedly; ordinary people are still left with the old burdens.

In the most recent form of existentialism all this is almost cynically admitted. Heidegger has hypostatized Kierkegaard's categories of Sin, Anguish, Guilt, etc., transforming them into eternal entities on which man cannot act but which are themselves preconditions of his activity. Heidegger's social philosophy defines as generic traits of existence the conditions of the individual's "self-realization" in a totalitarian society: he divides the people into an élite of philosophers whose task is "to break open the depths of existence" by rising from the level of "care" to that of "anguish," and the anonymous masses who have to content themselves with "care." There is no place in this world for salvation, redemption, recovery—and no other world exists.

III

One can hardly dispose of Kierkegaard by noting his contradictions, his ambiguous personality, and the fate of his doctrine in the hands of his disciples. Something in Kierkegaard's thinking asserts its universality and logic not only against shallow refutations but even against the mythical terms in which it is stated. This is the concept of "recovery." We doubt whether Job actually recovered what he lost. But his claims on existence are completely justified. To think otherwise would be to endorse existence as it is, and to join the moralists and priests. For man is not at home or at ease in this universe. It goes without saying that "recovery" is a fantastic category, but the converse of this category, that of man's alienation (as Marx has it) is still the most precise formulation of the human condition. In refusing to accept the com-

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pensations of the universal in return for the frustrating of the individual, Kierkegaard correctly assessed the position of modern man in his alienation. What he failed to realize was the historic nature of alienation, and of real recovery. Kierkegaard sought the individual's salvation in the individual himself but the only content he could find in the individual was an anguished striving for content. His efforts to conjure up a content led to myth and miracle. Thus Kierkegaard's most valid category which expresses (in a religious form) man's most legitimate aim—the overcoming of alienation—appeared to Kierkegaard as "absurd," as a "scandal." On the basis of his own premises, Kierkegaard's logic is unimpeachable. We can only applaud him for his courage in pushing to the absurd the position of pure individualism: in this he is certainly more lucid than many of our contemporaries, as the gap between the never-satisfied striving of religious faith and the practical consummation which reason seeks is indeed unbridgeable. By pointing to this gap Kierkegaard is infinitely superior to the modern opportunists who want to save God from the implications of science and the world from the real consequences of faith. Even Kierkegaard's rejection of all universals is justified, because as they exist today these universals are only mystified expressions of particular interests. Wherever modern man comes into contact with a norm, he feels, and justly so, that it menaces his individuality; and as a result his sensibility and sense of relatedness to life are now permeated by an implicit or secret distrust of universals. The fatalities of history seem so powerful, so unconcerned with his fate, he seems so completely sunken in anonymity, that he feels an almost virulent need to be reassured of his uniqueness. Here is the experience that underlies the "unique" categories of Kierkegaard.

But if we maintain that man can achieve recovery by historical action, do we not again sacrifice the individual to the group? Social action is necessarily directed toward the salvation of the whole; for each individual it involves the risk of losing what he personally wants here and now (and which he might obtain through some fortunate chance). He may wind up as an item in the expense-account of progress, he may be thrown into the "dustbin of history." Kierkegaard is right in protesting against such disposal of the individual, although his solution of the problem

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is fallacious. For we must recognize that no man can be free so long as other men are enslaved. In this world, in this society, no individual can achieve happiness without withdrawing to some degree from reality, without sacrificing some measure of consciousness; just as no one can attain full consciousness without some measure of unhappiness. To believe that the fundamental conflict is solvable is one thing, but to believe that it has already been solved is another. Any theory that comforts us through the implicit or explicit negation of the historical context in which our lives are caught, any theory that negates the reality of the struggle as though the full realization of man were possible in the immediate present, involves a degrading abandonment of lucidity. In our time, military virtue is part of the individual's self-realization, even though it exposes him to the risk of losing his own, unique, life. But the claim that such virtue can be the result only of blind faith, that to achieve it our awareness of the actual condition of the world must be dulled, is a further example of religious opportunism. Philosophy and experience teach us that the opposite is true: the best fighters are not those who cultivate sacrifice as an end in itself but those who even in the face of voluntary death preserve the conviction, at once bitter and exalting, that a world is possible in which men will control history instead of being controlled by it. We must never forget, however, that there is no justifying a society in which men who love are forced to renounce life and choose death.

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The Huxley-Heard Paradise

Richard V. Chase

"Serene and pure and radiant is your look, brother Sariputta! In what mood has Sariputta been today?" "I have been alone in Jhana, *brother, and to me came never the thought—I am attaining it! I have got it! I have emerged from it!"*

—ANGUTTARA-NIKAYA

THE READER of *Crome Yellow, Antic Hay, Those Barren Leaves* and *Point Counterpoint* will know that Aldous Huxley in the 1920's was darkly pessimistic about the future of the world. The prophecy of Mark Rampion (the Lawrence-like hero of *Point Counterpoint*) that ten years would see "the most appalling and sanguinary bust-up ever" shows, at least, that Huxley perceived the illusory nature of the armistice. But his diagnosis was not so perceptive as it seemed; for he was never able to state it in social terms. What Rampion predicted was a "psychological impasse." Huxley, in the midst of the war he predicted, is as much at sea as if he had never suspected that anything was wrong. He still believes that the crisis and its cure are purely psychological.

Huxley announced his disillusion in democracy in his now all but forgotten book called *Proper Studies* (1927). His thinking at this time was strongly conditioned by the social irrationalism of Pareto, Sorel and Trotter, "the psychological types" of Jung and, perhaps oddly enough, the Catholicism of Cardinal Newman. Democracy, he believed, was a dogma of an inadequate eighteenth-century psychology. *Proper Studies* was an attempt to set up a naturalistic hierarchy of psychological types. Its political sentiments, though they were not worked out concretely, were those of a learned Catholic.

But Huxley, the elegant psychologist, had little talent for social thought, and under the influence of D. H. Lawrence, whose understanding of the irrational so overwhelmed him, Huxley dismissed *all* kinds of social theory as the evil products of a mechanized civilization. He decided to lead the pan-experiential life of the Noble Savage, and to that end, proclaimed his allegiance to

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Thor, Quexalcoatl, Venus, and a number of other deities. His ideal Savage appeared from the fastnesses of nature in *Brave New World* to struggle with a scientific society in which feeling had been reduced to ersatz sensationalism and automatic sloganeering substituted for knowledge. A new note of mysticism, however, finds its way into this book: the necessity of "the intensification and the refining of consciousness," a process against which every atom of the Brave New World conspires. The idea that the scientific intellect is insufficient and indeed immoral and that the extension of consciousness by the technique of mysticism is imperative has always seemed possible to Huxley. (Calamy, in *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), decides at the end of the book that his destiny is to become a mystic contemplative.) And this is the burden of Huxley's writing since *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936).

Huxley has become the publicist of the California mystics and in this capacity reveals himself again, as he did when he was publicist first for Lawrence and then for Paretian psychology, as an ingenious but mostly unoriginal writer. We shall have to turn to the works of Gerald Heard therefore to find the historiography and psychology of this particular sect of mystics. For Huxley and Heard are only two of the prophets of a new spiritualism which arises, like vapor from the embers of a fire, out of the troubles of our time. No one can have read Toynbee's *Study of History,* for instance, without feeling the persuasiveness of this spiritualism, with its universalism, its pacifism, its poetic amalgam of science and mythology, its rapt otherworldliness and its saintly dedication.

The psychoanalytic bias of Heard and Huxley gives their mysticism an affinity not only with Toynbee but with a great synthesist of the last century, Auguste Comte. Heard's theory is, in fact, the most elaborate historical attempt to merge science with religion, seen as the problem of the split personality, and to objectify the purpose of human love since Comte, trying to work out the implications of his deep-seated neurosis, wrote his *Positive Polity*.

2.

Gerald Heard was born in England in 1889 and was educated at Cambridge. He has been an "extra-mural lecturer" for Oxford University and from 1930 to 1934 he was a commentator

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on "science" for the BBC. Mr. Propter, the Orientalist eremite whose disquisitions are occasionally interrupted by a mediocre plot in Huxley's *After Many a Summer*, is presumably Gerald Heard. Heard's first full-length book was *The Ascent of Humanity* (1929); he has developed the ideas set forth therein at the rate of more than one book a year ever since. Some of these books, such as *Pain, Sex and Time* (much of which derives from a simple misreading of an anthropological text) and *The Third Morality*, often fall into carelessness and vulgarity of phrase. In the following pages I have used for the most part his *The Ascent of Humanity*, *Social Substance of Religion* and *The Source of Civilization*, books which betray a certain poetic insight into the liminal consciousness and an ability to make public myths out of private experience.

Like all the latter-day mystics Heard puts the few teleological questions which he considers at all into the false terms of mind-vs.-matter. Matter, we are told, is evil; mind is good. Darwin, Marx and Freud were "necessitarian mechanists" who stripped us of free will, morality and dignity by fettering the human soul to a rigid cosmos.

The remedy for the evils of a world which has sold itself to technology is not the conscious intellect or the social sciences. Heard's theory rejects the entire heritage of Western science, for to him the Western sciences are no more than the willing tools of a material cosmos. In defense of his thesis he denies the reality of substance; the mind alone is ultimate and imperishable, and what seems to the deluded to be substance is nothing more than fantasy. Hence we find Heard maintaining in *The Ascent of Humanity* that the evils of our civilization are "symptoms" of our conscious intellect. Despite his rejection of science, however, Heard's diagnosis is based on psychoanalysis; and this leads him to believe that we live in an "individual-disintegrated" society which is the "shadow" of our individualized, disintegrated psyche. The political chaos and war of the twentieth century are the end-products of a split in the human psyche which took place at some indeterminate time in proto-history. The dispassionate scientist, the Machiavellian politician, the capitalist, the romantic rebel, the militarist, are incarnations of evil who have split themselves off from their moral sensibility and from society; they are agents of a material cosmos.

Heard maintains therefore that modern civilization is "neu-

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rotic." But even to Heard a statement of this kind is meaningless unless society is taken to be neurotic as an *individual* is neurotic. This comparison between society and the individual, outlined most explicitly in his *Social Substance of Religion*, provides Heard's otherwise somewhat obscure theory with whatever systematic cohesion it has.* History appears to him to be an allegory of the life of the archtypical modern neurotic: the middle-class Oedipus. His use of the Freudian clinical method is orthodox: "We must seek in the past for conditions when the subconscious demands were not outraged, and for the crisis which brought about their repression. Finally, we must recreate, in the present, conditions which will grant those demands their satisfaction."

Heard reconstructs history into three epochs, each one corresponding to a stage in the development of the hypothetical neurotic:

1. *The Epoch of Integral Consciousness.*

This is the primeval Golden Age of man, when "use and means were not yet distinguished from beauty, enjoyment and ends." The human being was originally completely unselfconscious, thinking only as a member of the group in so far as he was conscious at all. He was, in fact, still "an unfissured psychophysical organism . . . a peaceful, cooperative, suggestible, affectionate animal." The peaceful savage had no notion of individuality or utility.

As the Oedipus is doomed perpetually to turn back toward the mother-harmony, so Heard pictures society longing for the lost Golden Age, which, he concludes, must have been matriarchal. The possibility of this reconstruction appeared to Heard from his reading of Malinowski's *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*. Malinowski, who lived among the matriarchal Trobriand Islanders, held that Freud's notion of the primal society springing out of the Oedipus conflict was an improbable monism. The traditional evolutionist idea that matriarchy everywhere preceded patriarchy, however, died with Bachofen and McClennan, and Malinowski wisely refuses to establish any monistic succession. Heard, never-

*If Heardism seems unclear, that is not entirely because Heard is confused but also because, like the Buddha, he is proposing a "path" (or as the Christian saint says, "an itinerary of the mind to God") rather than a philosophical system. But Heard is constrained to write history, which, like most other speculative subjects, the Buddha thought it idle to discuss.

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theless, insists upon the primitive matriarchy, "the emotional base of which," he says, "is self-forgetfulness in devotion."

Heard's Golden Age is founded upon what he called in 1929 "the new anthropology," which was in fact the *old* anthropology of the French School. For it was Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl who in the days of the herd instinct and the group consciousness imagined the undifferentiated savage, unable to think at all except by means of *représentations collectives* according to the laws of *participation mystique.* The effect of this abstraction was to picture the savage as a victim of chronic psychosis, even in his most commonplace dealings with his environment.

Heard alleges W. H. R. Rivers' "The Disappearance of Useful Arts" as evidence that modern savages tend to revert to the primal condition when, for one reason or another, they are cut off from the diffusion of outside influences. It is true that Rivers observed a tribe of Polynesians who had unaccountably abandoned the manufacture of canoes, bows and arrows, and pottery—all articles which seemed to an outsider to be eminently useful in this particular environment. Heard believes this to prove that savages, isolated from other cultures, will slough off the arts and crafts of the conscious man and return to the original state of unfissured mind. But Rivers makes no claim of finding any uniform reversionism in his studies of the complicated ups and downs of Polynesian culture. The tendency, in fact, of the more careful anthropologists—Boas, Lowie, Malinowski, Ruth Benedict—has been to reemphasize the functioning of a measure of common sense in the savage's reaction to his environment. And one of the most effective uses to which they have put psychology is to correct the oversimplified idea of the "group mind" and to indicate the presence, even among the lowest savages, of the individualist.*

2. *The Epoch of Balanced Consciousness.*

This is the period of proto-history, when the early civilizations of the Middle East came into being and when the foundations of the matured neurosis were laid. The harmonious psyche was fissured, says Heard, and this produced for the first time the disas-

*An incidental weakness of Toynbee's *History* is that he perpetuates this mythical primeval society and pictures modern primitive societies as sleeping quietly in an identical, undifferentiated "Yin" state, exhausted by the ordeal of their "mutation" from subhumanity, and so unable to respond to the cosmic rhythm of Yin and Yang.

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trous discovery of self. The Golden Age is followed by an advance in the worldly arts and by the complication of society; aggressive non-conformists emerge in the shape, for instance, of Frazer's priest-kings. The priest king is persecuted and often murdered, says Heard, because of the group's subconscious hostility to individualism; he is paradoxically revered because he is "the passive incarnation of the group" who has "to suffer that they may live." Thus religion becomes the sanctuary of the individual in his flight from the group; it functions as the social substance. Other (or the same) individualists become secular leaders when they realize their selfness and see that there are ways of exalting themselves at the expense of the group. The rise of priest-kings, dictators and heroes characterizes the proto-civilized period of balanced consciousness—balanced because religious practices (proto-civilized yoga and mystic reunion with the group) counteract the disintegrating influence of individuals. The beginnings of modern "disruptive" society appeared when the patriarchal system finally followed the matriarchal. For this meant the intensification of the Oedipus conflict, which produced "algolagniac self-centeredness and self-projection" and provided man with the repressed energy necessary for waging wars and building empires. Mankind has thus lived through a time of trial which is symbolized by the child's emerging selfconsciousness and the conflict aroused in him when he becomes aware of the disruptive individuality of the father, both revered and hated like the priest-kings. But in this early epoch society retains its balance as the adolescent successfully balances the conflicts of bisexuality.

3. *The Epoch of Alternating Consciousness.*

This succeeds proto-civilization. It is the era of our classical and modern societies, the era of the gradually losing battle of the psychic vs. the physical, the religious vs. the secular, the social vs. the individual. Society is disrupted as the individual is disrupted by the Oedipus' matured conflict: the recurring mother-urge vs. conscious self-assertion in the outer world.

These epochs end in "the age of revolutions," which began with the Thirty Years War, the age of the explosion of society—since societies "explode" from an excess of individuality rather than decay like an organism. "The entire process of humanity is the breaking up of the mass into individuals and the reintegration

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of these in a new and higher unity." The solution of the conflict, which now reaches its utmost intensity, the method by which civilization will complete the dialectic movement of group through group-vs.-individuality to a higher integration—all this is to be found in the new synthesis of Heard and Huxley. "Here," says Heard, "is the door passing through which the individual returns to society, society becomes the race, the race is reunited with life and life becomes one with the universe."

The human traveler, in other words, went astray when, as he passed through the quiet shadows of the first stretch of road, he came upon a crossways and was tempted to take the divergent path. This was the path of the lust of the self, and it led into a world of light and noise which, at first but dimly perceived in the distance, gradually fettered the traveller to its rigid mechanism. The world, turning like a wheel faster and faster, and gradually losing its grip on the center of gravity, finally threatened to disintegrate from its own centrifugal force. The Huxley-Heard way of escape from this world is, in a sense, the way of D. H. Lawrence. If we are to save ourselves, we must recapture the original "central Mystery," as Lawrence's Paul Morel gives up his fight with the world to seek his dead mother. "Finally," in the words of Spengler, "the soul turns weary, listless and cold; she loses the appetite for existence; and all her longing is to leave the light . . . and to sink back into the darkness of primitive mysticism, into the womb, into the grave." The peace which Lawrence sought, his "pure adventure," was not to be found in this world, and when he plunged into the primitive and the irrational, it was in search of "the pure and sacred readjustment of death." And indeed how else is life to be made, as Heard says, "one with the universe"? But Lawrence told us that he knew of a good life, and it is not surprising that Heard and Huxley tell us the same thing, though in different words.

Heard proceeds to the problem of establishing a new Golden Age by regenerating the psyche—by means of a "psychological mutation." Human evolution, to Heard and Huxley, is not biological; it is mental; it is the gradual emergence and extension of consciousness, the gradual vaporization of matter into mind. Heard seizes upon the still obscure genetic factor of mutation and con-

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cludes that social evolution is a series of mutations of the mind. A theory of this kind can be ingeniously supported, simply by going back to a point where the facts are sufficiently befogged. Heard does this with the aid of another kind of outmoded anthropology: the dogmatic diffusionism which arose in protest to the equally dogmatic idea of independent cultural evolution (as it was conceived by Frazer). The diffusionists (like Elliott Smith and W. H. R. Rivers) insisted on the irrationalism and uninventiveness of man and held that culture originated in one or more centers and became diffused throughout the world by migrations and military campaigns. Heard gives this a purely idealistic twist, maintaining that what is diffused is "a new outlook on the universe" or "general frames of mind." Thus he holds, on very scanty evidence,* that the cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, the three "arcs of proto-civilization," were "precipitated as a whole" from a primeval culture somewhere in the Middle East.

Our problem, then, is to make a similar psychological mutation and to precipitate the new society as a whole. And this is the true destiny of man, for he is the only mental creature, the only creature, therefore, equipped to escape the biological evils of "specialization and intra-specific warfare," which have accounted for the atrophy of countless subhuman species (and, as Toynbee shows, of human societies as well). In order to learn how to make this mutation, Huxley and Heard turn to the religious mystics—the Buddhists, Lao-tzu and the Taoists, the Christian mystics, the Quakers—who allegedly know the psychological technique and have practiced it with parochial success ever since the mass of mankind lost touch with the Golden Age.

It is a commonplace that when a cultivated civilization decays from its own inner confusion or from the threat of barbarism, the tender-minded become concerned with the injustice of the evolutionary processes of nature. The passional urges, which seem to conform to the natural processes and to deny humane morality, appear to be overwhelming. The ideas of sin and pain become obsessive. The most complete possible solution of this problem, short of suicide, was made some 2400 years ago by Gotama, the Buddha. And in the Buddha is to be found much of the psycho-

*Namely, that archeologists find in this region no indication of a *developing* culture.

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logical basis of the Heard-Huxley "path." The teaching of Gotama, as has often been said, was a medical psychology of desire. Inordinate craving, so it seemed to him, chained the live being to the inexorable wheel of transmigration—the biological rhythm of birth and death, made rigid and meaningless by the law of *Karma*, which held that the live being inherited a deterministic "condition" from its predecessors. Gotama, as a reformer of Hinduism, denied the existence of the *Brahman*—the infinite All of Hindu cosmology. "Look upon the world," says the *Dhammapada*, "as a bubble, look upon it as a mirage." What appears to the unenlightened to be material is only a temporary pattern of sensations. The human being is an "aggregate" of lusts whose senses (though this is only one interpretation) the Buddha conceived as avenues of infection from the outer world. The escape from the law of *Karma* (a doctrine, by the way, which somewhat parallels Jung's "primordial images") can be effected by self-annihilation. Through the mystic experience the slave of nature can enter *Nirvana*, "the void and unconditioned freedom,"* or what to the Christian is the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

The reaction of Heard and Huxley to Darwinian evolution and Freudian psychology is as radical as Gotama's to the doctrines of his day. The popularized catchwords of the new mathematical physics, which seem to indicate the immaterial nature of the universe and to confound mass with motion, are sufficient proof to Heard and Huxley that materialism has been written off as false doctrine. For, as Huxley says in his *Ends and Means*, individual entities are now seen to be only "particular patternings" of "ultimately identical units of energy." Experiments in hypnotism and telepathy, such as those of Dr. Rhine, are taken by Heard and Huxley to indicate the extra-sensory quality of perception. The besetting obstacle in the way of regeneration, however, is the individualized self. And in fact our particular crisis, so we are told, makes the very survival of the race dependent upon our success in annihilating the self, for if we do not succeed, our specialization in warfare may bring us to complete disaster. "In another war," wrote Heard in 1929, "what is to be dreaded even more than the

*From Irving Babbitt's translation of *Dhammapada*. Professor Babbitt was of course less interested in the abnormal psychological states of the Buddha than in his restraint and urbanity. Buddhism was a "true" religion as opposed to the "false" emotionalism of Christianity and Romanticism.

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actual violence is the complete disappearance of group loyalty . . . and a savagery of social chaos unprecedented because there is nothing to contain the terrible energy of an unprecedented number of completely loosed individuals." The totalitarianism of the dictators, according to Heard (*Man the Master*, 1941), is an ersatz answer to this threat of anarchy, which must be superseded by the genuine solution.

The technique of mysticism consists of varous stages of concentration during which the discursive activity of the mind is gradually diminished. The mind changes focus from one *Jhana*, or level of "ecstatic musing," to another.* A Buddhist text describes it thus:

> When, aloof from sensuous ideas, aloof from evil ideas, he enters into and abides in *First Jhana*, wherein attention is applied and sustained, which is born of solitude and filled with zest and pleasant emotion; when next from the subsiding of attention applied and sustained, he enters into and abides in *Second Jhana*, which is inward tranquillizing of the mind, self-contained and uplifted from the working of attention, is born of concentration, full of zest and pleasurable emotion; when next through the quenching of zest, he abides with equal mind, mindful and discerning, experiencing in the body that pleasure whereof the Ariyans declare: "Happy doth he abide with even lucid mind, and so enters into and abides in *Third Jhana*"; when next by putting away both pleasant and painful emotion, by the dying out of the joy and misery he used to know, he enters into and abides in *Fourth Jhana*, that utterly pure lucidity and indifference of mind, wherein is neither happiness nor unhappiness—this is the training of higher consciousness.

The goal is the immediate apprehension of the divine presence, an affective, emotional apprehension freed of worldliness by the annihilation of all desire and all imagery. The nature of the mystic trance differs with different mystics, often being accompanied by symptoms of schizophrenia, catalepsy, epilepsy or neurasthenia. All mystics seem to have in common, however, the feeling of security, of escape from frustration, of the universality of love and the transcendence of individualism. To Gerald Heard

*What Huxley tries to convey by jumbling the chapters of *Eyeless in Gaza* is the possibility of mutating from *Jhana* to *Jhana*. He will have none of the empiricist's *divisio non facit saltum*.

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and Aldous Huxley, mysticism is the method of *thinking* or perhaps of *feeling* a new society into being.

3.

Huxley's novels left little doubt about his preoccupation with sex and his feeling that the civilized European had lost the meaning of love. Lurking in nearly all of Huxley's lovers was the sense of the pointless mechanism of sex and the enervation of never being able to love anyone or anything. Love became, once again, an act of the natural cosmos through the individual.

Auguste Comte seems to have been made suddenly aware of his own overwhelming love-urge upon the death of his divine Clothilde, a lady for whom he conceived a virtually unbelievable infatuation. There is consequently a sharp break in his thought almost approaching amnesia between his *Positive Philosophy*, which was an attempt to show how sociology might be made a positive science, and his mystical *Positive Polity*, which in effect denied all that he had previously done and was an attempt to rationalize in a visionary polity his own immense preoccupation with the problem of love. In the Utopia of Huxley and Heard, the urgent need to find a love-object is satisfied by diffusing the drives of the libido into a mystical love for society and also into what amounts to an infatuation with the universe. (Comte advocated the affectionate worship of Space.) They believe that sexual love must be strictly controlled. Heard says that the sex act must be performed exclusively for the sake of the diffusive before and after stages, since the moment of orgasm is individualizing and disruptive. Huxley, in *Ends and Means*, urges strict continence so that the sublimation of the sex drive may supply the energy required for the enlargement of consciousness. The text behind this idea is J. D. Unwin's *Sex and Culture* (1934), a somewhat laborious book devoted to proving, with evidence from 80 savage and 6 civilized societies, the social efficacy of sex repression. The highest stage of any given society, according to Unwin, follows the period of its most stringent sex mores. At this high point "human entropy" appears, impelling men who have hitherto given their energies to imperialism and technology to turn to intellectual refinement. It is this "human entropy" which Huxley intends to use in making a

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"psychological mutation." This displacement of the love object, through repression and the mystic experience, seems so imperative to Heard and Huxley that, like Comte, they are willing to do almost any sort of intellectual violence to attain it. Thus their departure from the Western tradition of empirical thought has a quality of amnesia similar to that found in Comte. Even when they use the familiar terms of social science, the "tone" which we have come to associate with them has been dissipated and forgotten. This is apparent in Huxley's recent book, *Grey Eminence*, a study of the part played by Father Joseph in the power politics of the Thirty Years War. "No attempt has been made," says Huxley, "to depict in any detail the political and social background to Father Joseph's career." The book betrays, in fact, very scanty recognition that there *was* anything political, social or economic about this outburst of French nationalism which resulted in the death of eight million Germans. Father Joseph was a religious mystic, who might have been a "theocentric saint." In his moments of trance he seems to find the answer to his quest: " 'Let there be love,' he repeated, modulating his orison out of Meditation into Affection, transforming it from an act of the discursive intellect into an act of loving, self-renouncing will. 'Let there be love.' And taking his own lovelessness, taking the malignantly active nothing that was himself, he offered it up as a sacrifice, as a burnt offering to be consumed in the fire of God's love." But Father Joseph is also a ruthless power politician and collaborator with Richelieu. His failure to remain the benevolent mystic and refrain from the immoral activity of the politician is ascribed to the fact that his *technique of mysticism* was at fault, that he never quite succeeded in mutating himself into the psychic saint. And this is intended not only to show why one man allowed himself the practice of evil, but also to explain the bloody upheavals of the modern world from the Thirty Years War down to the present.

When Aeneas entered Carthage, Venus, the cruel goddess of false images, saw fit to cloak him with obscure airs so that he might go unnoticed. The obscurities that shroud social phenomena in the works of Heard and Huxley make their Utopia nearly as invisible as was Aeneas to the Carthaginians. Heard tells us that it will be a "psychological communism" rather than an economic communism. The egalitarian implications of that "psychological

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communism," however, are somewhat elusive in view of the fact that it entails a system of caste. Huxley in *Ends and Means* (1937) is still convinced, as he was in *Proper Studies*, that the good society must have a hierarchy of human types. He, therefore proposes three psycho-physical castes: the cerebratonic, the visceratonic and the somatatonic. The first includes only those who are capable of mystic contemplation; the other two groups will have to seek the enlargement of consciousness in more elementary ways, such as mimetic dances and Yoga.* The society will be headed by psychic supermen called "theocentric saints" or "neo-Brahmins," who have attained "the highest degree of orison," in whom, to quote Huxley's description of a seventeenth century Christian mystic, "the process of illumination and sanctification has gone so far that the merely human element is no more than a thin psycho-physical shell enclosing a core of constantly realized divine immanence."

The organization of the Utopia will begin by the formation of small groups or cells of saints, who will spread the doctrines of religious mysticism and perform good works. As these isolated cells increase in number and influence, the decentralization of government and industry will be gradually effected, so that large-scale social planning, which is evil as such, will become a thing of the past. Society will become homogeneous and pacific.

If I understand the nature of the prospective Utopia at all, it is unthinkable as a society of highly civilized men, and perhaps of any kind of men. Certain primitive societies have been known to live under something like the emotional totalitarianism which Heard and Huxley have in store for us. The Zuñi Indian society is one of these, as both Heard and Huxley have pointed out. The most striking characteristic of Zuñi culture is its extreme "Apollonianism."* All signs of individuality, the display of knowledge, the grasping of power—even the demonstration of excessive grief—bear a heavy social onus. There is no political aggrandizement among the Zuñi, but on the other hand there is little individual freedom or progressivism—since society almost always manages to stifle the rebel and to provide some kind of socially acceptable outlet for his unorthodox urges.

*"Yoga," a cognate of the word "yoke," thus carries the idea of *connection* with God or society.

*See Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* on the Zuni, and on the whole question of the social nature of neurosis.

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It is significant that the institutional arrangement of Zuñi society, as Dr. Benedict says, "militates against the possibility of the child's suffering from an Oedipus complex." The individual mystic or seer is regarded with suspicion by the Zuñi, but here nevertheless, is a society which has the pacific homogeneous emotional tone admired by the religious mystics.

The dangers, however, of trying to establish such a totalitarianism in our industrialized culture are legion. The greatest is that, though the Huxley-Heard Utopia is allegedly psycho-therapeutical, it would probably create a mass psychosis. For while its constitutionally passive citizens, its introspectives, and those subject to the trances of nervous disorder might be able to survive, even a mildly active, self-assertive or creative man would be considered a megalomaniac, and what is worse would become one in fact. This is not to deny the possibility of social eclecticism—of "humanizing" society by broadening its acceptable range of experience. That is the hope offered to us by modern anthropology and it is to the credit of Huxley and Heard that they have at least raised the question of inter-societal diffusion. But their one-sided idea that "revolution begins at the top" and that cultural diffusion consists of an exchange of the bare bones of thought without reference to institutional context or biological history spoils their project before it gets fairly started.

4.

Curiously enough a striking general criticism of Aldous Huxley was made in the year of his birth by his own grandfather. In 1894 the aged T. H. Huxley gave his dramatic Romanes Lecture, in which he warned that no humane ethic was to be found either within the cosmos or in fleeing from it. He had learned too much of the harshness of animal evolution to doubt that the future progress of man would sometimes be shattered and confused. And he was clearly aware of the extreme aberrations of the mind in Times of Trouble. But he had faith in his intellectual tradition, and he implored his contemporaries never to forget the duty of empirical thought. His dichotomy between the cosmic and the human was perhaps not quite valid, but his words accurately forecast the failures of his grandson: "Let us understand," he said, ". . . that the

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ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combatting it."

Aldous Huxley, three decades later, was trying to solve the problem of immorality by an enthusiastic participation in the ways of nature. Evil, as he saw it in his society, was evil because it was the expression of an arbitrarily selected *part* of nature. Good was the expression of *all* of nature. In *Point Counterpoint* he contrasted the pan-emotional and instinctual Rampion with such fragmentarily instinctual characters as Lucy Tantamount and Spandrell. In *Brave New World* the complete natural man emerges from the cosmos to criticize a depraved society.

When Thomas Huxley warned of the Buddhist way of escape, it must have seemed to his listeners even at that late hour of the century that no consequential Englishman would ever seriously entertain such a thought. But it is this way out, as we have seen, that Aldous Huxley has taken. And in doing so he has already left us a classic record of the aberrations of the learned and ingenious but utterly unpragmatic mind in our time. It is small wonder that such a mind believes the evils of the world to be attributable to a "fissured psyche" and evolution to be a series of "psychological mutations."

Yet T. H. Huxley, for all his rationalist's fear of religious mysticism (like Gibbon's in the eighteenth century and Frazer's in the twentieth), could scarcely imagine the vigor of its recurrence in his grandson's day. We ourselves have not yet understood the force of this "etherialization," as Toynbee calls it, this full-blown expansion, this inspired exhilaration of the mind suddenly released from what is felt to be the dungeon of materialism and organic evolution. Nor is this recrudescence of mysticism a triviality of the weary European mind, or nothing but a literate version of charlatan religions like Theosophy and Spiritualism. For besides the work of Bergson and the considerably lesser works of Huxley, Heard, Sorokin and others, it has nurtured Toynbee's *Study of History*. And this is a work which, though still unfinished, is already one of the great philosophical visions of society, the vision of a myth-making intellect which makes other historical syntheses seem both parochial and philistine. But what image arises from Toynbee's superb mythical biology if not the psychic Superman

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for whose creation it is supposed to be the whole purpose of man to struggle? Like Gerald Heard, Toynbee believes that evolution is the mutation of Subman to Man followed by the mutation of Man to Superman (Toynbee's words). His doctrines of Ordeal and Withdrawal,* and the psychoanalytic itinerary of Huxley and Heard lead them to the general conclusion that mind supersedes matter in the process of the universe, and that the function of the species is the struggle to reach a realm of being somewhere "above" the region of response and influence for which nature has best fitted them.

The Chinese mystic, Lao-tzu, taught in the *Tao-te-Ching* that ideas should be like babies, that they should not be allowed to go out into the world to become tough or muscular like men. Ideas should live in the Yin state, not the Yang. And this is what happens in the thinking of Huxley and Heard; for their thinking never finds an external environment, or having found one, it draws back and refuses to interact and mature—a psychological retraction in the manner of the Buddhist *Maha Parinibbana*, the "Utter Passing Away." With Heard and Huxley spirit is innocent of matter, mind does not feel the senses; ideas are separated from context, organisms from nature, change from condition, esthetic experience from sensibility.

The secluded spirit may find peace or the fleeting vision of Utopia in the ecumenical church of the mind, but looking out from the gray shadows and intervening in the sunlit world, the spirit pays the price of its isolation by losing all its elegance and becoming pompous and crude. The mystic mutation of the spirit is austere megalomania, but megalomania is not the way of nature; if it were, as Lucretius asks, would not nature produce

> Men of such mighty bulk, that they could wade
> Through the deep places of the sea, or rend
> Huge mountains with their hands, or in one life
> Overpass many living generations?

Spirit does not need to be *pure* spirit; and indeed it is only the tincture of matter that keeps it from its narcissism, its cosmic sleight-of-hand and its practical cruelty.

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*Toynbee's mysticism, however, is Christian rather than Buddhist. For to him the mystic withdrawal has no value unless it is the first beat in the rhythm of "Schism-and-Palingenesia." His God-like Savior is transfigured, not annihilated.

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Human Nature is Not a Trap

Ruth Benedict

FAILURE OF NERVE is not the same disease in every civilization. Some nations stand most firmly and with unexhausted courage when all is apparently lost, some resign themselves to fate. These patterns are clear not only in resistance to a foreign enemy but in internal conflicts; they stand out most sharply in resistance to an outside invader. Even primitive tribes and kingdoms, when they are called upon to face the inexorable spread of White civilization, force on our attention the importance of knowing what form collapse will take in any culture. Whole kingdoms, like the Incas of Peru, or the aboriginal states of Mexico accepted White domination in the age of the conquistadors with a rapidity and à painlessness which is one of the curiosities of history. Their capitulation involved no failure of nerve in the populace. They merely exchanged one overlord for another, and they naturally did not see this as involving any question of preserving the integrity of their existence. If eventually they were the more deceived, that was a circumstance they had to bear as they could, sometimes sullenly, sometimes with resignation. They gave up the battle almost before it started and they doggedly continued to operate along their old familiar lines even in catastrophe.

The free tribes of the Americas, whether they were Abipones in South America or Dakotas in North America, took an exactly opposite course. They valued their personal autonomy above all things and saw life as a series of decisions they themselves made. All their integrity was called in question by any act of capitulation. They saw nothing of value in the peonage or the wardship the Whites offered them and they fought and fought and fought again. Many fought themselves to actual extermination; in South America some fled to the jungles of the Amazon or the wastes of the Gran Chaco. Whatever happened, morale meant to them resistance, and capitulation was a proof that they had lost their nerve. When they were disarmed and trapped and forced to

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accept the strangers' will, their nerve failed at last; men lost then some vital contact with the core of their being. Life became meaningless.

America too identifies morale with the fight for personal autonomy. Industrialists fight against the regulations of government—even after they have admitted that they profited from them. Labor fights to have a hand in the hiring hall and in policy. States fight for state rights. We all of us fight against Hitler's threat of world domination. Whether these fights are waged with words and wire-pulling in our own country or with bombs against the Axis, we approve of not pulling our punches. Internal conflicts which in another nation would mean the nadir of morale are in the United States a healthy routine matter. The hysterical calumny opponents heap upon one another in a political campaign is a big biannual cursing bout; in our society it is not a sign of a febrile condition. We believe in cursing. It proves our nerve.

We Americans lose our nerve whenever we admit we are trapped. We lose it in the mind and body of the man who tramped the pavement in the Depression fruitlessly looking for a job until he became at last an unemployable, reconciled to living without hope upon relief. We lose it in the person of the farmer who sells off his cows and quits struggling. We lose it in unhappy marriages where the husband or the wife, or both of them, decide that they are trapped in a hated relationship. We lose it in the professions when men feel caged by circumstance in teaching or in business or in the law and spend their lives day-dreaming of some other profession that was denied to them. Any improvement of morale in America is first and foremost a program that convinces Americans that there is still a meaning in effort, that the strength and training and human relations they've got now, this minute, can be put to some use. We want to be at work. We want our work to have some meaning. Then we can put up with all kinds of disruption of our personal lives, with bad housing, with incomparable monotony of the assembly line. Our bodies and our emotions are employed; when they are, we feel that we belong to our American civilization. We are strong.

Failure of nerve among American intellectuals is all of a piece with this pattern that runs through the rest of American life. The intellectual defeatist, too, cries out that we are trapped, that

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our work is wasted. It hardly matters whether he phrases his case as a retreat from reason or as a medieval absolutism or as the discovery that man's spirit is caged by a fixed and universal human nature. What all these phrasings mean in America is that human effort, of the mind and of the body, is futile. The upshot of these arguments is that we are puppets pulled by strings we do not see; we are poured for all time into moulds made for humankind by God or by Neanderthalers; there is no future we can freely choose and freely make.

The version of human nature that is presented by these writers is most explicitly stated by Max Eastman. "Why," he asks, "did the monumental efforts" of leaders from Robert Owen to Lenin "so miserably fail?" His answer is short and to the point: "Because they had no science of human nature." And this science of human nature which they failed to take into account is now known, he says, and teaches that man's "native endowment was evolved in prehistoric times"; it was belligerent, it was an ineradicable temper "toward dominating others and toward submitting to them." This "hereditary as against the acquired nature of man" makes him a creature who will inevitably "bow down to others or boss them," and this human nature "reappears in the original form in every baby that is born." This dominance-submission of original human nature sets its cement barriers to any kind of a world which man can strive to bring about. No world will ever be very different from this one.

As an analysis of modern European history, Max Eastman's points are sustained by almost any candid history. He outruns the historians only in bringing in Neanderthal Man. And when he does this and chalks up to the cave man the nationalism, the conflicts of rich and poor, the imperialism of European history, he has flung his challenge to the anthropologist. For there is such a thing as the scientific study of human nature without weighting it to our own historical background, and the evidence from such studies does not bear out Max Eastman's dogmatic conclusions about man's nature. The picture that emerges is quite different.

No anthropologist would disagree with Max Eastman insofar as he is merely saying that there is something that is common to humankind. There is a sense in which human beings are one, but it is a main task of the anthropologists to identify just what this

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is. What is universal is not belligerency or the will to boss or be bossed. War was a late arrival on the human scene and for tens of thousands of years man lived without weapons of warfare. Even contemporary primitive societies are not always war-oriented. And it is almost proverbial how many of them will not stand for bossing or being bossed.

The sense in which human beings are one is not Max Eastman's sense. But it can be identified. Man does have a "native endowment evolved in prehistoric times." It evolved slowly through aeons. Its tentative first steps occur in birds and animals, and the history of man is a story of how the pace of this development quickened at last to a run. But the achievement itself is clear and on it all human achievements are based.

This basic human achievement has to do with the new manner in which organisms learned how to survive in their environment. Before mankind, organisms came to terms with Nature by organic specialization and bodily differentiation. They adapted themselves to their environment just insofar as their bodies were slowly modified to fit, and these solutions were transmitted by inheritance. Once such a solution was made, it might persist from the Pliocene to the present if the environment was propitious; if conditions changed too rapidly, whole species became extinct.

But man slowly learned to come to terms with the natural environment in quite another way. For better or worse, human survival was increasingly pinned, not to inherited organic specializations, but to learned behavior. Man learned to make himself clothes to protect himself against the cold; he made himself houses. He made spears and bows and arrows with which to hunt. He did not grow dagger-claws on his hands or weapon-like teeth. He invented ways to solve his problems and taught these solutions to his children. He took his ways of life into his own hands and his survival was no longer predicated upon adaptations written into his body but upon choice of expedients he had himself adopted.

With each successful, non-biological invention, the new process became further established, and all human beings everywhere on the earth share it. The great advantage man won by his paramount reliance upon learned behavior was plasticity. Possibilities of adjustment were enormously increased in sheer numbers, and the length of time that had to be consumed in effecting some solu-

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tion was enormously shortened. This plasticity is the basis of all human achievement, for in the process all the essentially human traits came into being. Reason, foresight and judgment are attributes which are a very part of the process of inventing human solutions of human problems.

This is the sense in which all human beings share a common human nature which runs back even to Neanderthal Man. In this sense men are one. But even to state clearly this common nature of humankind underscores the fact that "human nature" does not prescribe any one selected kind of human world. This human dependence on invention and on learned behavior meant by its own logic that man could fashion heavens or hells. Man could provide against a time of want or he need not provide. He could make a society where men habitually killed relatives on whom less precariously adjusted societies depended for daily sustenance. Men could head-hunt among tribes on whom they depended for necessary economic supplies. They could deal with their fellows in terms of naked power or they could laugh and sing and work together. The fact that human nature is at one in taking its ways of life into its own hands has its grave dangers. It exacts its penalties when men arrange their affairs badly. But universal, up-from-the-ape human nature does not lay down laws which make inevitable any particular forms of dominance-submission and of aggression which may have established themselves at any one moment of time or any one region of space.

The social disorders of the modern world do not come, as many disillusioned intellectuals have said, from ignoring the belligerency of human nature. They are consequences of man's having arranged his affairs to his own disadvantage. They are consequences of inadequate social solutions of human problems. They come especially from fundamental arrangements in our civilization which make it necessary that a man achieve his own ends at the expense of other men; groups of men equally believe that their profit is only to be secured through loss suffered by another group. Some cultures outside of Western Civilization have organized their arrangements so that purposes are achieved by acting in common and in such societies a man's own interests are served by so acting. No congenital aggression in human nature prevents such societies from maintaining the way of life to which they are committed. If

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they have done a good job of social engineering they need not fear that aggressions inherited from Neanderthal Man will wreck their society.

What we need to study in human society is how different social inventions have worked and how they have fostered or diminished hate and belligerency among people who are mutually dependent upon each other for necessary services. We need to study the consequences of fundamentally different arrangements and to appreciate how many various forms these arrangements take. One of the reasons for failure of nerve among present-day intellectuals appears to be that some years ago they narrowed their view of possible arrangements down to two, one of which they called communism and one something else. When their chosen scheme turned out to share in the difficulties created by the forms of nationalism and the will to power which are rampant in Western Civilization, they cried havoc. But the original difficulty lay in narrowing the field to two fixed contestants. There is no need to sign on one or the other dotted line. There are many possible forms of social order and disorder, and patient and energetic action can bring the one out of the other. We are still far from any peace time program which makes use of and trains all men to participate to the best of their ability in the vast activities of a civilized world. Step by step we must move in that direction, increasing opportunity and responsibility all down the line. We see more clearly than we did a few years ago how far short we fall. We shall need to do our best to improve the conditions. But until we have stabilized and extended our gains and scotched some diseases like the business cycle and "depressed areas" and our modern version of nationalism, it is only escapism to call in Neanderthal Man and make a scapegoat of him. The sources of our difficulties lie many tens of thousand years closer to us than the Old Stone Age.

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The Failure of the Left

Sidney Hook

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURE of the new failure of nerve, we have argued,* is its effort to break out of our time of troubles by a faith that would save sinners, but *also* lead to a better social order. Even the most advanced representatives of this tendency insist that a concern with sin is a condition precedent for intelligent reforms. For as the Archbishop of Canterbury reminds us in the course of the most radical of his social pronouncements: "When all is said, the trouble with our social life is sin—that strange perversion and fatality of human nature as a result of which, if we are not guided by trusting to the grace of God, we convert our very blessings into curses."**

However it may be with the locus of sin, sin is not the locus of our social trouble. Because they do not know where to look for the causes of social trouble, because they rely too much on sentiment and magic to solve the economic and social problems of our day, those who have married supernaturalism to social reform face a bitter disillusionment. This will be marked by a violent return to a theology without social gospel.

But suppose church members were to leave sin to God. Where could they go? To what groups or organizations could they turn? The tory right either doesn't recognize these problems as soluble or would meet them by a dictatorship of the best people. The liberal center is opportunistic and confused—always waiting for something to turn up and always taken by surprise. The radical left—everything left of center—unfortunately would feel very much like home to them. They would find themselves astonishingly at ease in the atmosphere of mysticism, of passionate, sometimes sacrificial, unrealism, and of hysterical busywork which today fills the zones of the radical spirit. For in its own way the political

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left shows just as definite a failure of nerve as the more numerous and conservative groups to which it aspires to give leadership. In virtue of its pretentious claims, its failure is even less excusable.

* * * *

When we speak of the failure of nerve on the left, we are not referring, of course to the Communist Party of the U. S. A. which is little more than the American section of the G. P. U. Nor are we referring to the miscellaneous but very large assortment of individuals who have fallen out of the fight for a better world because they are discouraged or tired or emotionally exhausted by the political failures and betrayals during the last generation. Some of them have earned a rest. More have made their retirement an occasion for reflection rather than of public repentance or prayer. The best of them will come back, for the taint of political interest cannot be washed out even by the blood of the Lamb. And although they may say: "Let the world go hang," they are sufficiently intelligent to realize that if it goes that way, it will end by hanging them.

Nor, when we speak of the failure of nerve on the left, do we refer primarily to literary critics like Mumford, Waldo Frank, MacLeish, and others of this school who although they imagine themselves philosophers of a sort, are certainly not political figures. If they must be classified, it should be with the tendencies previously criticized. Mumford's attack upon "pragmatic liberalism" and Waldo Frank's jeremiads against "empirical rationalism" make them lay brothers of the forward-looking obscurantists who, in more priestly categories, lecture us to the same effect, viz., that Western civilization has been betrayed by scientific philosophy. It is quite appropriate that M. Maritain should hail them as allies.*

By the "left" we mean those political groups who either avow themselves openly revolutionary or who, professing allegiance to democratic collectivism, are hide, hair and tail-feathers in Roosevelt's political camp. In different ways all of these groups, proud of their pretensions to scientific politics, have succumbed to a metaphysical approach to politics. They can offer nothing except

*I have elsewhere considered the views of Mumford, Frank, and MacLeish in some detail. cf. "Metaphysics, War and the Intellectuals." *The Menorah Journal*, Autumn, 1940.

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desperate hope to those who wish to think in a world in which they must also act.

Platonic Revolutionists

The most doctrinaire sections of the revolutionary group have become Platonists. We shall describe rather than identify them because they are currently being subjected to unjust and foolish prosecution by the government. They worship a system of Ideas originally projected as instruments of social action. Historical experience, having long since been impolite enough to reveal the inadequacy of these Ideas, is no longer regarded as capable of exercising a veto power over them. And so they have become transformed into shining fetishes valid in their own right. As abstractions, unrelated to the fresh problems of the historical present, they illustrate what Marx once characterized in his criticism of Stirner as the supernaturalism of irreligion.

Socialism is the opposite of Capitalism. History has been frozen into this fixed antithesis. There are no other possible social alternatives. Fascism is a form of Capitalism. If one is opposed to Capitalism, then by definition it is illegitimate to support a capitalist society which is still democratic in a war against Fascism. One must oppose them both! Whatever difference in degree exists between them, does not warrant a temporary choice, not even a qualified temporary choice, between them. The state is the executive committee of the ruling class. The ruling classes in the democratic and Fascist countries are the same. Therefore a war between them is no concern of socialists, for both sides are imperialistic. This remains true even if a democratic country is invaded by a Fascist power, and the labor movement and its allies face the prospect of exchanging the status of democratic legality for the iron heel of Fascist terror. In such a case there are two variants in this Platonic heaven. Normal madness: the workingclass should fight *both* Roosevelt and Hitler at once. From heaven's psychopathic ward: the workingclass should *first* fight Roosevelt, and *then* Hitler, since according to the shade of Lenin "the chief enemy of the workingclass is its own government," and everyone knows you fight your chief enemy first.

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This is the basic scheme of the Platonic revolutionary position. Is it necessary to refute it? If Hitler wins, democratic socialism has no future. If Hitler is defeated, it is by no means *assured* that democratic socialism has a future. But it at least has a chance! It is failure to grasp this simple piece of wisdom which marks the political insanity of infantile leftism.

As if to underscore their impotent fanaticism, although neither of these factions is Stalinist, one of them believes that workers in democratic countries should support *any* war the Soviet dictatorship is engaged in but *no* war of their own democratic government even if it is allied with the Soviet Union: while both of these factions accept in toto the Theses and Resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International, which lays down the following line for *all* countries of the world: "Only the workers' government, consisting of Communists, can be the true embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Why should anyone be fearful of these religious hymns by Lenin's Witnesses? Their jangled rhythms give an automatic immunity to any intelligent worker who hears them.

Romantic Revolutionists

There is another group whom we may call romantic revolutionists. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they are Bohemian revolutionists, since outside of Dwight Macdonald's lively pages in *Partisan Review*, the view is proclaimed mainly by half-sober blusterers at cocktail parties. These are intellectuals who are too sophisticated to accept the crude schematism of the Platonic revolutionists, whose bodies at any rate engage in mindless political activity. They are theoreticians without practical or theoretical responsibility. They admit that the consequences of a Fascist victory would be much worse than the consequences of a democratic victory, but they draw no political implications from the admission. They say that a socialist government has the best chance to defeat a Fascist enemy and then conclude illogically that a democratic capitalist government which hasn't the same good chance, has none at all, and that whatever chance it has cannot be increased by the activity and agitation of socialists who give *critical* support to the war. All political parties, they tell us, are rotten. Their own role is to cry stinking fish instead of trying to organize a better one. They are fond of saying that

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whoever gives up the struggle for socialism has given up the struggle for democracy, which from a long-time historical perspective is true if we define democracy as something more than the Bill of Rights and freedom of political opposition. But they overlook the converse of this proposition which is even truer, to wit, *whoever has given up the struggle for democracy here and now against Fascism has already given up the struggle for socialism.* The struggle for democracy, whatever *else* it requires of those who still believe in socialism, at least demands open support of the war against Hitlerism.

Doctrinaire Confusion

This would be the place to discuss the position of the Socialist Party if its declarations were sufficiently clear. It was in favor of sending aid to the democratic bourgeoise of Spain in its struggle against Franco, even if such action involved us in war. It opposed sending aid to England, locked in death battle with Hitler, on the ground that America might become embroiled. It did not condemn the stand of the British Labor Party in refusing to declare for pacifism or revolutionary defeatism in the face of Fascist threat. It *seemed* to approve of such a stand—and, then again, by opposing aid to England—it *seemed* to disapprove. It openly declared that were the United States to be invaded by a Fascist power, it would support a war against the invader. It scoffed only at the ability, but not at the intent, of any Fascist power to do so. It thus made a matter of fundamental principle depend upon the cruising radius of bombers in an era of rapid technological revolution. After Pearl Harbor it *seemed* to say that it gave no political suport to the war but so far as anybody can observe it drew absolutely no consequences from this statement. There is happily not the slightest trace of an anti-war attitude in *The Call,* its official organ, in many ways a useful paper. It does not even call for a negotiated peace but for a "just" peace, a "people's" peace, one of whose precedent conditions is, of course, the military defeat of Hitlerism.

Although one definitely gets the impression that the political line of Norman Thomas is not that of his party, the irresolution of both can be traced to a characteristic procedure in his discussions of the war. These discussions concern themselves primarily with the question: "Who is *responsible* for the war?"

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rather than "What are the *consequences* to democracy and socialism of victory by one side or the other?" The answer to the first question, of course, is "in varying degrees, everybody," but this has no bearing on the answer to the second question which gives the decisive clue to the socialist position on the war. At most the answer to the first question bears not on *whether* the war should be fought, but on *how* it should be fought and the *kind* of peace that should be made.

It is a pity that the great gifts of intelligence and leadership possessed by Norman Thomas have not risen to the opportunities and difficulties of the present situation. All his energies have been absorbed in the useful but not sufficient task of preaching the desirability of ultimate socialist goals and in peripheral comments on war measures—comments that will remain without influence and directive force upon events until the fundamental ambiguity of his position on the war is removed.

Doctrinaire Opportunism, or Those Who Get Slapped

The movements described above are comparatively unimportant for they have practically abandoned political activity for a life of political imagination. Much more striking is the failure of left-wing groups which are so much in the thick of things that they have forgotten their own justifications for engaging in political action. These groups constitute a loose federation which we may call "the progressive front." It is made up of New Dealers, political editors of all the liberal weeklies and their following, the right wing of Social Democracy, and powerful trade unions in both the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. Despite their differences with each other on specific issues they manifest a dominant tendency in their political thought and action. This tendency simplifies the political world situation to the single issue —"for or against Hitler"—and draws no adequate conclusion from the fact that those who are against Hitler are themselves basically divided in aim and allegiance. The Platonic and romantic revolutionists correctly perceive that the objective oppositions between the masses, on the one hand, and the capitalists who believe in the preservation of democratic forms, on the other, are not cancelled even in their common struggle against Hitlerism. Their error consists in concluding, therefore, that they have no

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common interest in Hitler's defeat. Those whom we may call opportunist socialists perceive correctly that there is a wide common interest in the defeat of Hitlerism; they overlook systematically the objective oppositions between those who are for the moment companions-in-arms.

If my house is afire the man who holds the mortgage on it will help me to put it out, if only for reasons of self-interest, although other considerations are not excluded. But nonetheless he may try to foreclose on me tomorrow. The infantile leftist is guilty of the criminal folly of saying: "Let the house burn. Fight the dirty exploiter!" The opportunist socialist forgets that he must still reckon with the man who holds the mortgage when the fire is out. And more immediately, that issues may arise over whether the furniture, which belongs to the mortgagee, or the fixed appurtenances, which belong to the mortgagor, are to be saved.

Granted, then, that the military defeat of Hitlerism is the first step to any possible socialist reconstruction of the world. But it is only the first step, and a socialist and labor movement which ideologically disarms itself when it cooperates with its opponents for a specific task, may find itself terribly disadvantaged after a purely military victory. What is worse, it may find the world in such a state that it may become necessary to put down another Hitler in another twenty years. Not only for its own interests but for the interest of the entire community, it cannot lose sight of its programs and the ideals of a democratic socialist world order.

It would be unfair to say that those socialists who are now giving uncritical political support to the Roosevelt regime have abandoned or forgotten their ideals. But it would not be unfair to say that in their political activity they have abandoned in the name of "realism" a scientific, critical approach to questions of politics. There are four conspicuous illustrations of this exemplified in different ways and in varying degrees by the constituent elements of the progressive front.

1. The first is the failure to recognize the indispensable character of an *independent* political party to achieve a socialist program. Without an independent political party—and the American Labor Party is not yet such a party—they cannot even exact

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a fair social price for political cooperation. They serve as convenient tails to one or the other of the two main political kites. They magnify trivial differences between these parties into great issues of principle, shamelessly reversing themselves from year to year and place to place instead of building a reservoir of power from the steady flow of justified resentment, social vision and knowledge, which springs from the experiences of the masses with old line politics. They channel this potential power into the same political ditches, with new slogans that center on the excitements of the moment. As practical men they scorn all theories and then show by their practices that they are victimized by incompatible theories. Every time they make a deal they justify it on the reasonable ground that they are choosing between fascist reaction and democratic liberalism. And were this in fact the choice, they would be justified many times over. But to date we have never been confronted by such a choice in America, and their subsequent abrupt reversals in position expose the hollowness of their pretense that we have. What a chatter they made about Landon's dangerous tendencies in 1936 and Willkie's incipient fascism in 1940! We can safely predict that they will say the same thing about Roosevelt's political opponent in 1944 in order to justify their failure to pursue independent political action.

2. The second expression of political unrealism is the extent of their dependence upon individual leaders—Roosevelt and Wallace in America, Churchill in England—to win their social battles for them. Few things are more amazing than the sight of those who are social determinists—in however modified a fashion—wallowing in the euphoria of hero-worship. For most of the American Left, it would be no exaggeration to say that Roosevelt has taken the place of a program. His intentions are good, he knows best, some of his closest friends are liberals, some of his worst enemies are labor-haters—why spoil matters with carping criticism so long as Hitler remain undefeated? That is the new political theme song. And what if, as a result of present war-policies, Hitler still remains undefeated? What if big business is permitted to sabotage the war effort when new industrial processes and demands of a war economy threaten its capital investments? What if the social gains of the New Deal, which were not Roosevelt's free gifts—but concessions to keep capitalism on an even keel—are

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gradually withdrawn? Well, if there isn't Roosevelt, there is another liberator, Willkie, who out of office is even a greater political virtuoso than Roosevelt in office. For does he not speak with a new political voice each month? Does he not promise something to everyone, even the economic royalists whom Roosevelt excluded from the magic of his rhetoric? If the necessity of loving creates an object for itself, the necessity of hoping finds a political savior and redeemer even more easily.

3. Failure to rely on an independent political party combined with an apotheosis of the leaders of other political parties, testifies to the abandonment of the theory that politics is an expression of the struggle between class interests. If it was unintelligent to believe, as it was, that politics is *only* an expression of conflicting class interests, for in every civilized community there are some interests that are common, it is just as unintelligent to believe that it can be understood without assigning to conflicting class-interests great weight. And yet the attitude of opportunist socialists reflects this illusion. The defeat of Hitler and the establishment of a new League of Nations with power to enforce the decisions of the great powers within it, seems to them to be sufficient. There is no adequate realization of the conflicting class forces in the nations that will be liberated from Hitler's rule: of the conflicting interests between the colonies of all the great empires and their mother countries: of the conflicting interest between the great powers themselves: of the strength of the class struggles that still go on in their own country despite the slogans of national union. Although this is not said in so many words, one senses the attitude that the military defeat of Hitler is a final solution to problems that were unsolved when he came to power, and, for all that is proposed to do about them, will remain unsolved after he is overthrown. Churchill may be satisfied merely with winning the war against Hitler: the labor and socialist movement cannot.

4. Almost all of the socialists in Roosevelt's camp who are compelled to face squarely the issues of social change, defend themselves on the ground that Roosevelt is achieving essentially the socialist program. *He* may not be aware of it but *they* are convinced that he is an instrument of the social need of the disinherited. The precise content of Roosevelt's program and action is left in doubt but the general description of it is given as a drift

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towards collectivism in which government controls achieve the same effect as outright socialization. We find therefore a most uncritical support of *any* measure that strengthens the hand of the government and builds up centralized political authority. The danger that someone else will step into the locomotive cab of the collectivist revolution and drive it on totalitarian rails is not given a thought. And to raise the question of the appropriateness of specific means to *democratic* collectivist ends is cried down as a kind of social Fifth Columnism. "Drift towards collectivism" is a vague but true general description not only of social developments in American but elsewhere, some of them of a very grim kind. All the more, therefore, is it incumbent, not only upon socialists, but upon genuine democrats and liberals who have outgrown laissez-faire, to buttress the specific cultural freedoms of society and to plan for specific safeguards against the abuse of the powers that must necessarily be delegated to centralized authority. How little genuine concern there is for the problems of safeguarding freedom is evidenced in the public contention of Vice-President Henry Wallace, that darling of the left, who recently complained, when he was praising Russia's "economic democracy"(!), that the United States suffered from "excessive political or Bill of Rights democracy." Not a single one of the liberal weeklies, which would have frothed at the mouth if a conservative had suggested that we suffer from too much political democracy, took Wallace to task for his foolish and threatening words. In the present conjuncture of social, economic and military events, Wallace and his friends are much more threatening heralds of a totalitarianism, in the mythology of liberal and democratic rhetoric, than conservative democrats like Hoover and Gibson who do not, as yet, believe that our political democracy is excessive.

The Left has permitted itself to be manoeuvered into a position where the false label of totalitarianism may be pinned on it and made to stick. After many years, the war against Hitler has made it possible for the Left to break the monopoly of the American Legion on patriotism and intelligent love of country. But it is unwisely permitting Big Industry and the Bourbon South to assume roles of defenders of the Bill of Rights against bureaucratic usurpation. That role is socially preposterous and hypocritical. Think of Dies inveighing against the evils of bureaucracy!

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Or Reynolds ranting about dangers to the Bill of Rights. Yet politically it is very effective. But with Wallace and other admirers of Russia's "economic democracy" in the camp of Roosevelt, the uncritical support by progressives of all measures increasing the scope of administrative law, their attitude towards Congress which often implies that it is superfluous, if not a positive obstacle, in the era of collectivism,—against all, this social reaction can masquerade as defence of the abiding values in the spirit of liberalism.

To the extent that the Left is supporting measures as temporary expedients that are likely to result in permanent social disabilities, it betrays not only a failure of nerve but a failure of intelligence and morality. A correspondent in a recent issue of *The Nation,* protesting against a lapse from its customary line, has unwittingly summarized in one sentence the futility of this policy of the left: "The issue before the democratic world today is victory, regardless of cost or ethics." In other words let us beat the Nazis even if we become like them. Stated in this extreme form the progressive front recoils from the position. Since recent events in North Africa, the liberal weeklies, at any rate, have returned to the oppositional benches in respect to foreign policy, although the political groups and trade unions, that are in a position to exercise greater pressure, still remain silent.

Perspective for the Future

Is there, however, any alternative to Utopianism and opportunism in politics? The presupposition of our criticism, of course, is that such an alternative exists. It may be briefly characterized as the acceptance of the "Clemenceau thesis" from the left towards the conduct of the war. During the first world-war, Clemenceau, from the right, undertook a campaign against the existing French administration on the ground that it was not waging the war effectively enough. By the end of the war he was hailed as the organizer of victory. Today the great labor organizations and their political allies, instead of concentrating mainly on time and half for all overtime over forty hours and similar measures, ought to build an independent political bloc, outside of the major existing parties. Their immediate program should insist that *in the very interest of a complete military victory over Hitler* all the submerged interest

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of the nation be given a greater stake in that victory; that the war be fought in a *total* democratic fashion without accepting the restrictions of capitalist property relations or business as usual on its effective prosecution; that the war be fought in a total *democratic* fashion by insuring participation of labor and consumers in war counsels, not as appointees of administration, but as representative of their own organizations. By preserving its independence, by giving critical political support to the war against Hitler without accepting entire political responsibility for its conduct, the labor movement will be in a much stronger position to influence its course, and to take the lead in domestic reconstruction when post-war reaction sets in.

This alternative has its difficulties, too. But is there any other feasible alternative which is free of even greater difficulties? The notion that the waging of a prolonged war and a total one is the specialized, exclusive concern of the military or administration is a mistake. A realistic appraisal of the way in which the war has been conducted, on matters in which sufficient public knowledge *is* available, reveals glaring errors of judgment in planning the retooling and expansion of industry, accumulation of raw materials, man power utilization, rationing, use of educational services, propaganda to break down confidence of enemy peoples in their own governments,—all of which have a vital bearing on the 'purely' military phase of the war. The basic fact is that the nation has not yet been psychologically mobilized for war—a mobilization which, because it is necessary for victory and survival, will have to take place. Whoever takes the lead in such a mobilization by way of suggestions, volunteer organizations, inspiring slogans, truthful criticism, will enjoy immense moral authority and insure a receptive hearing for its social program. Why let the reactionaries move in and give their characteristic slant to the popular movement against Hitlerism?

There are some who say that even if democrats and socialists appreciate the necessity of crushing Hitlerism, *their* function is not to play the part of ideological drum-majors. There are plenty of *others* who can do that. Rather should they devote themselves to defending the democratic rights that have not yet been blacked out in total war, to thinking up plans for postwar reconstruction, and devising means for the prevention of World War III. This

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is a foolish and artificial division. Democratic right can be much more effectively defended by a labor movement with an unassailable position on war, which has strength and authority, than by pacifists or anti-war socialists. And the wishes of those who have been half-hearted or lukewarm about the war against Hitlerism will certainly not be consulted after the war is won. But even more important, it is infinitely preferable that the Reuthers capture the popular consciousness with their ideological formulations of what the stakes at issue are in this war than that the Rickenbackers do so.

There remains the question of the actual likelihood of independent labor action on the part of the left. The objective conditions for unified action along the lines sketched here will mature just as soon as the reaction against the New Deal and labor organizations, already in evidence, acquires force. Roosevelt will not hesitate to jettison more New Deal cargo and change course if his party machine can still get that kind of political support from the progressive bloc in the name of patriotism, which it could not get from any other social group without paying for it. In order to keep even what it has, the progressive bloc must organize itself independently. Otherwise its aspirations will be taken no more seriously in Washington than the representations by the Jews on Palestine are taken by Downing Street which knows that no matter what it decides, the Jews will have to accept its decision after observing the decencies of protest. But whereas the Jews have no alternative in their tragic plight, the progressive bloc in this country still has. If labor's gains are to be extended after the war, it will be only in virtue of the political power it commands. Is it too optimistic to believe that the urgencies of immediate interest as well as the advantages of the long view will be grasped by the rank and file and leadership of the progressive bloc? The least we can do is to bring these considerations home to them.

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A Letter From England

George Orwell

Dear Editors,

It is just on two years since I wrote you my first letter. I wrote that one to the tune of AA guns, when we were in desperate straits and also on what appeared to be the edge of a rapid political advance. I begin this one at a time when the military situation is enormously better but the political outlook is blacker than it has ever been. My last letter but one, which I wrote in May of this year, you headed on your own initiative "The British Crisis." Well, that crisis is over and the forces of reaction have won hands down. Churchill is firm in the saddle again, Cripps has flung away his chances, no other leftwing leader or movement has appeared, and what is more important, it is hard to see how any revolutionary situation can recur till the Western end of the war is finished. We have had two opportunities, Dunkirk and Singapore, and we took neither. Before trying to predict the consequences of this, let me sketch out the main tendencies of this year as I see them.

Although the individual incidents don't fit in so neatly as they might, the rule has held good that the Government moves to the Right in moments of success and to the Left in moments of disaster. Collapse in the Far East—Cripps taken into the Government, Cripps' mission to India (this was probably so framed as to make sure that it should not be accepted, but was at least a big concession to popular feeling in this country). American victories in the Pacific, German failure to reach Alexandria—Indian Congress leaders arrested. British victory in Egypt, American invasion of North Africa—tie-up with Darlan and fresh bum-kissing for Franco. But over the whole year—indeed I have mentioned it in earlier letters—there has been visible a steady growth of blimpishness and a more conscious elbowing-out of the "reds" who were useful when morale needed pepping up but can now be dispensed with. The sudden sacking of Cripps merely symbolises a process which is occurring all over the place. Apart from the general rightward swing there have been two other developments which seem to me significant. One is the Second Front agitation, which reached its peak about July and thereafter took on a more definitely political colour than before. The North African campaign has temporarily silenced the clamour for a second front, but in the preceding months the controversy had not really been a military one but was a struggle between pro-Russians and anti-

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Russians. The other development is the growth of anti-American feeling, together with increased American control over British policy. The popular attitude towards America has I believe changed in the last few months, and I will return to this in a moment. Meanwhile the growing suspicion that we may all have underrated the strength of Capitalism and that the Right may, after all, be able to win the war off its own bat without resorting to any radical change, is very depressing to anyone who thinks. Cynicism about "after the war" is widespread, and the "we're all in it together" feeling of 1940 has faded away. The great political topic of the last few weeks has been the Beveridge report on Social Security. People seem to feel that this very moderate measure of reform is almost too good to be true. Except for the tiny interested minority, everyone is pro-Beveridge—including leftwing papers which a few years ago would have denounced such a scheme as semi-fascist—and at the same time no one believes that Beveridge's plan will actually be adopted. The usual opinion is that "they" (the Government) will make a pretence of accepting the Beveridge Report and then simply let it drop. The sense of impotence seems to be growing and is reflected in the lower and lower voting figures at by-elections. The last public demonstrations of any magnitude were those demanding a Second Front in the late summer. No demonstrations against the Darlan deal, though disapproval of it was almost general; nor over the India business, though, again, popular feeling is pro-Congress. The extreme Left still tends to be defeatist, except as regards the Russian front, and at each stage of the African campaign its press has clung almost desperately to a pessimistic interpretation of events. I think it is worth noting that the military experts favoured by the Left are all of them defeatist, and haven't suffered in reputation when their gloomy prophecies are falsified, any more than the cheery optimists favoured by the Right. However, this comes partly from jealousy and "opposition mentality": few people now really believe in a German victory. As to the real moral of the last three years—that the Right has more guts and ability than the Left—no one will face up to it.

Now a word about Anglo-American relations. In an earlier letter I tried to indicate very briefly the various currents of pro- and anti-American feeling in this country. Since then there has been an obvious growth of animosity against America, and this now extends to people who were previously pro-American, such as the literary intelligentsia. It is important to realise that for about fifteen years Britain has differed from most countries in having no nationalist intelligentsia worth speaking of. The average English intellectual is anti-British, and though chiefly worshipping the USSR has also tended to look on America as being not only more efficient and up-to-date than Britain, but more genuinely democratic. During the period 1935-9 the Left intelligentsia were taken in to a surprising extent by the "anti-fascist" antics in which so many American newspapers indulged. There was also a tendency to crouch cul-

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turally towards America and urge the superiority of the American language and even the American accent. This attitude is changing, however, as it begins to be grasped that the U. S. A. is potentially imperialist and politically a long way behind Britain. A favourite saying nowadays is that whereas Chamberlain appeased Germany, Churchill appeases America. It is, indeed, obvious enough that the British ruling class is being propped up by American arms, and may thereby get a new lease on life it would not otherwise have had. People now blame the U. S. A. for every reactionary move, more even than is justified. For instance, even quite well-informed people believed the Darlan job to have been "put over" by the Americans without our knowledge, though in fact the British Government must have been privy to it.

There is also widespread anti-American feeling among the working class, thanks to the presence of the American soldiers, and, I believe, very bitter anti-British feeling among the soldiers themselves. I have to speak here on second-hand evidence, because it is almost impossible to make contact with an American soldier. They are to be seen everywhere in the streets, but they don't go to the ordinary pubs, and even in the hotels and cocktail bars which they do frequent they keep by themselves and hardly answer if spoken to. American civilians who are in contact with them say that apart from the normal grumbling about the food, the climate, etc., they complain of being inhospitably treated and of having to pay for their amusements, and are disgusted by the dinginess, the old-fashionedness and the general poverty of life in England. Certainly it cannot be pleasant to be suddenly transferred from the comforts of American civilization to some smoky and rainy Midland town, battered by three years of war and short of every kind of consumption goods. I doubt, however, whether the average American would find England tolerable even in peacetime. The cultural differences are very deep, perhaps irreconcilable, and the Americans obviously have the profoundest contempt for England, rather like the contempt which the ordinary lowbrow Englishman has for the Latin races. All who are in contact with the American troops report them as saying that this is "their" war, they have done all the fighting in it, the British are no good at anything except running away, etc. The lack of contact between the Americans and the locals is startling. It is now more than eight months since the first American troops arrived, and I have not yet seen a British soldier and an American soldier together. Officers very occasionally, soldiers never. The early good impression which the American troops made on the women seems to have worn off. One never sees them except with tarts or near-tarts, and the same thing is reported from most parts of the country. Relations are said to be better in Scotland, however, where the people are certainly more hospitable than in England. Also, people seem to prefer the Negroes to the white Americans.

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If you ask people why they dislike Americans, you get first of all the answer that they are "always boasting" and then come upon a more solid grievance in the matter of the soldiers' pay and food. An American private soldier gets 10 shillings a day and all found, which—with wages and income tax as they now are—means that the whole American army is financially in the middle class, and fairly high up in it. As to the food, I do not imagine that people would resent the troops being better fed than civilians, since the British army is also better fed, so far as the ingredients of food go, but the Americans are given foodstuffs otherwise reserved for children, and also imported luxuries which obviously waste shipping space. They are even importing beer, since they will not drink English beer. People point out with some bitterness that sailors have to be drowned in bringing this stuff across. You can imagine also the petty jealousies centering round the fact that American officers monopolise all the taxis, drink up all the whisky and have inflated the rents of furnished rooms to unheard-of levels. The usual comment is "I wouldn't mind if they were fighting, not just talking." This is said out of spite, but it is a fact that the attitude will change deeply if and when the American army is engaged in Europe. At present the parallel with our own relations with France during the phony war is all too obvious.

Whether this state of affairs could be altered by better propoganda methods is disputable. I note that people newly returned from the U. S. A., or with knowledge of conditions there, especially Canadians, are concerned about Anglo-American relations and very anxious that the British war-effort should be more loudly boosted in the U. S. A. Britain's propaganda problems, however, are more complex than most people realise. To take one example, it is politically necessary to flatter the Dominions, which involves playing down the British. As a result the Germans are able to say plausibly that Britain's fighting is done for her by colonial troops, but this is held to be a lesser evil than offending the Australians, who are only very loosely attached to the Empire and culturally hostile to Britain. This dilemma presents itself over and over again, in endless variations. As to America, some propagandists actually hold that it is better for the Americans to be anti-British, as this gives them a good opinion of themselves and "keeps their morale up." Others are dismayed because we are represented in America by people like Lord Halifax—who, it is feared, may be taken for a typical Englishman. The usual line is "Why can't we send over a few workingmen from Wigan or Bradford to show them we're ordinary decent people like themselves?" This seems to me sentimentality. It is true, of course, that Lord Halifax is just about as representative of Britain as a Red Indian chieftain is of the United States, but the theory that the common peoples of all nations love each other at sight is not backed up by experience. The common people nearly everywhere are xenophobe, because they cannot accustom themselves to foreign food and foreign habits. Holding leftwing opinions makes no difference to this, a fact which impressed itself on me in the

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Spanish civil war. The popular goodwill towards the USSR in this country partly depends on the fact that few Englishmen have ever seen a Russian. And one has only to look round the English-speaking world, with its labyrinth of cultural hatreds, to see that speaking the same language is no guarantee of friendship.

Whatever happens, Britain will not go the way that France went, and the growing animosity between British and Americans may not have any real importance till the war is over. But it might have a direct influence on events if—as is now widely expected—Germany is defeated some time in 1943 or 1944 and it then takes about two more years to settle Japan. In that case the war against Japan might quite easily be represented as "an American war," a more plausible variant of "a Jewish war." The masses in Britain have it fixed in their minds that Hitler is *the* enemy, and it is quite common to hear soldiers say "I'm packing up as soon as Germany is finished." That doesn't mean that they genuinely intend or would be able to do this, and I think in practice majority opinion would be for staying in the war, unless by that time Russia had changed sides again. But the question "What are we fighting for?" is bound to come up in a sharper form when Germany is knocked out, and there are pro-Japanese elements in this country which might be clever enough to make use of popular war-weariness. From the point of view of the man in the street the war in the Far East is a war for the rubber companies and the Americans, and in that context American unpopularity might be important. The British ruling class has never stated its real war aims, which happen to be unmentionable, and so long as things went badly Britain was driven part of the way towards a revolutionary strategy. There was always the possibility, therefore, of democratising the war without losing it in the process. Now, however, the tide begins to turn and immediately the dreary world which the American millionaires and their British hangers-on intend to impose upon us begins to take shape. The British people, in the mass, don't want such a world, and might say so fairly vigorously when the Nazis are out of the way. What they want, so far as they formulate their thoughts at all, is some kind of United States of Europe dominated by a close alliance between Britain and the USSR. Sentimentally, the majority of people in this country would far rather be in a tie-up with Russia than with America, and it is possible to imagine situations in which the popular cause would become the anti-American cause. There were signs of this alignment in the reactions to the Darlan business. Whether any leader or party capable of giving a voice to these tendencies will arise even when Hitler is gone and Europe is in turmoil, I do not know. None is visible at this moment, and the reactionaries are tightening their grip everywhere. But one can at least foresee at what point a radical change will again become possible.

There is not much more news. Another Fascist party has started up, the British National Party. It is the usual stuff—anti-Bolshevik, anti-Big Business, etc. These people have got hold of some money from somewhere

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but do not appear to have a serious following. The Common Wealth people have quarreled and split, but the main group is probably making headway. There have been further signs of the growth of a left-wing faction in the Church of England, which has had tendencies in this direction for some years past. These centre not, as one might expect in the "modernists" but in the Anglo-Catholics, dogmatically the extreme "right wing" of the Church. The Church Times, which is more or less the official paper of the C. of E. (enormous circulation in country vicarages), has for some years past been a mildly leftwing paper and politically quite intelligent. Parts of the Roman Catholic press have gone more markedly pro-Fascist since the Darlan affair. There is evidently a split in the Catholic intelligentsia over the whole question of Fascism, and they have been attacking one another in public in a way they usually avoid doing. There is still anti-semitism, but no sign that it is growing. Our food is much as usual. The Christmas puddings, my clue to the shipping situation, were about the same colour as last year. It is getting hard to live with prices and taxes as they now are, and what between long working-hours and then fire-watching, the Home Guard, A.R.P. or what-not, one seems to have less and less spare time, especially as all journeys now are slow and uncomfortable. Good luck for 1943.

January 3, 1943

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Theatre Chronicle

THE RUSSIAN SOUL

In reviewing the current version of *The Three Sisters*, the New York drama critics, almost to a man, congratulated Miss Cornell on her all-star production and deplored her choice of play. What integrity, what generosity, what talent, and all, alas, wasted on an inferior play by a dramatist whom we all revere but who, it must be confessed, seems dull and bookish in these stirring times. The general impression was that Miss Cornell in her devotion to art had committed an act of desperate, if winning folly; like a great lady who loves the poor so much that she gives away her fortune to a beggar on the street. This inversion of values is a phenomenon that appears regularly at the revival of any classic, with the eternal exception of *Hamlet*. *Hamlet*, it is conceded, is a play for the stage: it is, in fact, *the* play for the stage; the other classics belong in the library, where the scholarly critic can study them at leisure—in the dramatic perspective of *The Eve of St. Mark*.

The fact is, of course, that *The Three Sisters* is not an inferior play of Chekhov, at least not strikingly so; it is earlier and cruder than *The Cherry Orchard*, but it is, on the other hand, more mature than *The Sea Gull*, and since Chekhov wrote only five full-length plays the choice was not a wide one. The fact is also that Miss Cornell, whose devotion to art is indeed painfully sincere, has given us a production that erupts heavily, like a slow volcano, over the topography of the play, so that the playgoer who would like to know what Chekhov was doing here must perform a considerable work of archaeology. There are intimations, it is true, of the original Chekhovian landscape, particularly in the performance of Tom Powers as the school-teacher, Kuligin, and the text itself survives as a map. Leaving aside questions of talent—for Ruth Gordon as Natasha gives a striking, even terrifying performance that is nevertheless as injurious to the play's values as Miss Cornell's awkward and sentimental Masha—the main difficulty is that American actors cannot understand why Chekhov called many of his plays comedies. To the American theatre mind, a play that culminates in disastrous events is, by definition, a tragedy; the murder in the last act gives the director his clue. If you add to this the fact that the characters are unhappy, it is plain sailing! The funereal note is struck in the opening speech and the play is driven—at a respectable speed—to its last resting-place in the fourth act. The critics then join the mourners in lamenting the fact that the play is dead.

Mme. Litvinoff (an Englishwoman) remarked to newspaper reporters that *The Three Sisters* is an absurd play about three grown-up women who spend four acts not going to Moscow when they have the price of

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the ticket. This description, though derogatory in intention, is perfectly exact. That is what the play is about, and the failure of the three sisters to get to Moscow (and indeed the whole nostalgic dream of Moscow) is not tragic, but pathetic, touching, absurd. The play is a study of the romantic character, and the city of Moscow is the earthly paradise, for which no railroad company can issue a ticket, no matter how prosperous the passenger may be. It is the illusion of happiness, nobility, and freedom, pursued abstractly in dreams, the mirage seen in the desert that dazzles the eyes of the thirsty traveler till he loses his bearings and no longer remembers what his real destination was. The three sisters rise superior to the realities of a provincial town and become its most abject victims. Their eyes fixed on Moscow, they allow themselves to be plundered by a vulgar sister-in-law, whose objectives are only too real and hence readily attainable. This is the fate of all the romantic characters in the play. The brother, whose heart is set on an enormous career in science (that is, on Fame) accepts an insignificant post on the local school board from his wife's lover, the ineffable Protopopov. Vershinin, the idealistic colonel, who talks of the beautiful world that will come into being in two or three hundred years, is the slave of his two little girls and of a wife who is continually embarrassing him by attempting to commit suicide. And Tusenbach, the serious little Baltic baron, who dreams of a life of hard work in his own brickyard, is killed in a frivolous duel by the brutal and oafish Solyony, who himself is acting out a dream in which he is a character in Lermontov.

These unfortunate people are charming, but, in a certain sense, not to be taken seriously. Morally speaking, they are all a little hollow, and their dreams of nobility and hard work have in them an element of pretense. There is an ugly scene in the third act where the sisters fail to defend their old nurse against the bad temper of their sister-in-law, and another painful scene in the last act, where Irina, the youngest sister, who knows in her heart that her fiancé is going off to be killed in a duel, refuses to speak to him a final word of love. "What? What am I to say to you?" she asks, innocently. These human failures are the true crises of the play, and in the end it is only the eldest sister, Olga, who by accepting against her inclination the post of head-mistress in the school, rises genuinely superior to circumstances, for by taking financial independence in exchange for her dream of Moscow, she is able to provide for the old nurse who has been driven out by Natasha. In Miss Cornell's production, however, none of this is to be found: the moral lapses of the sisters appear as aberrations or accidents; they are the innocent victims of a villainous woman, of fate, of provincial society, and the tragedy is, indeed, their failure to get to Moscow.

What is missed also is the comic element in the play. Chekhov's characters are both witty and amusing, and they have, in addition, a flickering awareness of the absurdity of their position, an inconsequent but nonetheless real irony which raises the whole problem from the level

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of action to the superior level of consciousness. It is Chekhov's peculiar use of a kind of modified soliloquy to treat the theme of self-consciousness that is his dramatic signature; Miss Cornell and most of her fellow-actors handle these delicate passages as though they were either so many yards of plain expository material or interpolated operatic dirges.

It is curious to find the Chekhovian themes popping up in an improbable melodrama called *Counter-Attack,* which by a further irony is a play by a Russian named Vershinin, that has been adapted by Janet and Philip Stevenson to American tastes. The revolution Colonel Vershinin anticipated has taken place, ahead of schedule, and the Red Army is defending its beautiful new world against the Germans on the Eastern Front. In reality, the new world might have afforded the Colonel his final disillusionment; in the play, the only flaw in the new world is the presence of Nazi troops on its territory: democracy and freedom prevail and the Russian soldier dreams of the "strong firm hand" of Comrade Stalin pressing him gently on his weary shoulder. Nevertheless, the obsessions that dominate *The Three Sisters* persist. Of the two Russian soldiers in the play, one is obsessed with the idea of correctness, military and ideological, and the other, who is a peasant and therefore more old-fashioned, is obsessed with the idea of heroism. One difference between this play and *The Three Sisters* is that both dreams come true. In trying circumstances, in a bombed dug-out with six Nazi prisoners, the soldiers are correct and heroic, and, after the war, I suppose, they will get a trip to Moscow at government expense. As Mme. Litvinov hints, if the three sisters had lived under Stalin, their problems would have been non-existent.

By looking hard enough, one can even find touches of Chekhov in *Dark Eyes,* a comedy by Elena Miramova and Eugenie Leontovitch. This is a play about three irresponsible Russian ladies and a rich Long Island factory-owner who is giving his all, under severe handicaps, to the WPB. Here the Russian character is burlesqued for the carriage trade, in what I presume is a gesture of amity to our victorious allies. The play is both coarse and reactionary; references to governmental red tape and Mrs. Roosevelt bring down the house and the appearance of a colored butler with an enema bag provides a suitable curtain at the end. Yet traits of the true Russian character, which is here called the Russian Soul, occasionally make themselves felt. Solyony, in *The Three Sisters,* goes off to a duel with a quotation from Lermontov on his lips. Nick, a dubious White Russian member of café society, in habits not unlike Solyony, is inspired by another quotation from Lermontov to enlist in the Canadian army. It is apparently easier for Russians to do things if they are under the impression that they are someone else. And Chekhov may be distinguished from Miss Miramova and Miss Leontovich by his belief that action induced by such intoxicants is not likely to be of the highest social worth.

MARY MCCARTHY

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Music Chronicle

COPLAND'S PIANO SONATA

About nine years ago, Aaron Copland added to an "austere," somewhat uncompromising style of musical composition, an alternate style appropriate to "music for use"—music for cinema, radio, schools, and the picket-line. This new preoccupation was not to exclude other "more serious" work, but some of us were apprehensive of the effect on the future of the remarkable idiom expressed by the *Piano Variations* (1930) and the *Short Symphony* (1933) which indicated so many possibilities as yet but partially fulfilled. The *Piano Sonata* (1941), which has finally been presented in New York,[1] is, however, reassurance of the fact that the other Copland not only continues to function, but assumes further significance. If anything is to be deplored, it is that the demands for "occasional" music stand in the way of the completion of more than one work like the *Sonata* in the course of several years. But this condition may be altered. An obliging forecaster of his musical intentions, Copland now advocates[2] a musical language which would realize the implications of radio and phonograph by addressing a larger audience without "writing down" and, after the manner of Shostakovitch when his "obvious weaknesses" have been discounted, without sacrificing seriousness. The *Sonata* may thus be a step towards concentrating in one form what Copland has been accomplishing separately in two fairly discrete series of efforts (to the partial exclusion of one of them). For while the allegedly "very severe" style of the *Variations* is much in evidence to discourage many listeners on their first acquaintance, there is also an admixture of the wholesome atmosphere of the music for the movie *Our Town* to soften the effect.

The exaggerated determinism of a certain glib school of "sociological" criticism is recalled when Copland insists: "More and more we shall have to find a musical style and language which satisfies both us and them"—*i.e.*, the composers who now constitute one another's audience, and the radio-phonograph public. Nevertheless, it is interesting in this regard to consider Mozart's confession (in one of his letters) that he put certain effects into his music to please his patrons (and he expected approval of these effects to be manifested in a way, moreover, that would currently be considered barbaric anywhere but at the ballet,—namely, by applause *during the music* as each effect is heard, just as we now applaud a pirouette). The merely ingratiating figures in Mozart's profounder works do not, however, stand apart as superimposed elements which aim at quick response. If we knew more about the music he might

[1]The *Sonata* was performed by John Kirkpatrick at Town Hall in January and by Leonard Bernstein at the concert given in February by the Town Hall Forum.

[2]In an article in the January-February issue of *Modern Music*.

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have composed without such concessions, we might even find that it profited from their inclusion.

In Copland's case, it would seem that his more immediately appealing efforts have actually exerted a favorable influence on the *Sonata* in return for the sensitivity and ingenuity which invest the "workaday" music as a residue of the "serious" style. For example, the *Sonata* has some tunes which are like those we normally whistle or hum. That is, the tunes do not exceed average vocal range, nor are the skips too eccentric. The ease with which a tune may be reproduced or retained or merely apprehended depends on its resemblance to ordinary non-musical, vocal experience (speech, sighs, shouts). A means is thus provided for touching upon commonly felt emotions; for one way in which music imitates feeling is by analogy with vocal inflection, and the commonly felt emotions are obviously embodied in inflections experienced in daily life. And, provided with this means, Copland has caught intensely human attitudes to animate the "tonal edifices" which Paul Rosenfeld once found to "resemble nothing so much as steel cranes, bridges and the frames of skyscrapers."

There is still another aspect in which the *Sonata* reflects Copland's recent concern with what psychologists would call "audience preference": the sonorous texture. Listeners like to abandon themselves in an aura of sound and in the *Our Town* music, *Quiet City*, and the *Lincoln Portrait*, Copland shows an awareness of this. At the other extreme is the *Variations* with its sparse chords, the gaunt exposed dissonances, its theme starkly disengaged from the quickly released harmonies (except in the fifth variation and the closing section). The *Sonata* lies somewhere between. There is still the pervading gloom of the *Variations*, the same bleakness in the constricted theme and its unvoluptuous harmonies; but there is an alleviating warmth and at times a cosy resonance. The chords do not leave us abruptly, but linger as if to plead a sorrowful case to evoke pity, or as if partly content in a certain resignation. This makes for an important difference between the two piano works which touches seriously upon their performance. There is a tendency of pianists to approach and leave the chords of the *Sonata* with a percussive sharpness appropriate to their treatment in the *Variations*. When Copland plays the *Sonata*, however, he has a way of resting in the keys as if to urge the maximum resonance out of them, and he encourages the listener to make much of the sonorous moment between the striking of one chord and the next.

I do not think the *Sonata* achieves "a language which satisfies both us and them," nor do I think Copland consciously sought it. The tunes are far from obvious enough for your "average listener," and while he will prefer the protracted chords to the ascetic single tones prolonged in the *Variations*, he will crave a prettiness to relieve the gloom. (And your average listener is also likely to lose patience at the extension of certain attitudes, unless he is sensitive to the subtle harmonies through which the attitudes are projected.) But more lyricism and greater sonority

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were needed to balance Copland's idiom of the *Variations;* and the impetus to acquire these attributes in a music to satisfy a more popular demand may have transferred itself in a modified form to the separate plane of his serious music where they are represented in quite a different way. Thus, while the *Variations* remains an admirable work, the *Sonata* surpasses it precisely in this new resonance and melodic warmth which now offset the dark atmosphere of prophecy and the contrasting nervous athleticism which are common to both works.

If, like Stravinsky, Copland is capable of absorbing so much of what in literature would correspond to the colloquial, without the music itself losing dignity or sophistication,[3] it is because of that early concern with purification and structure which gave him the reputation for severity. Platitude is not simply paraphrased (as in the Roy Harris "*Folk Song*" *Symphony*) but recast to fit into a significant form (even in *El Salon Mexico* and the new *Piece on Cuban Themes*). Whatever cliché he seizes upon—a cowboy ditty, a Spanish turn, a New England hymn—is transformed into an unmistakably Coplandesque configuration. The degree to which his formal methods have crystallized is, indeed, sometimes as disturbing as it is admirable. They ought, rather, still to be in flux. For, though his musical structure has advanced to a remarkable point in consideration of the tradition from which it departed, and though it is outstanding for its perfection as far as it ventures, it is capable of further growth towards the inclusion of a greater number of elements. A direction for this growth is pointed by some of the younger men today, like David Diamond and Harold Shapero, who reflect the Copland of the late 'twenties in their ardent preoccupation with form and refinement of technique (while another of the younger men, William Schuman, sways critics and audiences with a music of unquestionable power but surprisingly naive structural conception).

Copland's and a still older generation had accomplished the levelling off of the effusive remnants of Wagnerian hysteria and Impressionist revery. But Diamond and Shapero (as represented in a *Concerto for Two Solo Pianos* and a *Violin Sonata*)[4] show an awareness of a necessity for building up the thinned-out musical medium with more genuine substance. Once Copland had arrived at a skeletonized music he remained fairly faithful to it since it satisfied a certain romantic desire for a highly personalized expression in which so many notes had to be excluded because they were not completely his own—even the common stock of

[3]It is, of course, to be admitted that Copland does, in rare instances, fail to go beyond mere uncritical reproduction, as in the slow middle part of *El Salon Mexico* where one passage creates the illusion of listening to almost any competent Mexican band—as if the composer were saving his ideas for the brilliant long line of the fast closing section. This is not true of Stravinsky. Compare, for example, *Jeu de Cartes* where the only instance of almost exact repetition of the object alluded to (a reference to Rossini) has an obviously ironic intent.

[4]The *Concerto* of Diamond was performed by Bartlett and Robertson at the Kaufman Auditorium of the YMHA. The Shapero *Violin Sonata* has not been given in New York up to the date of writing.

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useful ornaments, like *arpeggios* and scales. (It is a mistake to attribute Copland's sifting out of coloristic material to purely "neo-classic" motives). The result is a music which often lacks enough matter with which to achieve long undulating lines and various levels of significance, though the personality comes through excellently. There is, however, so much solidity and precision in what is given, that an ultimate evaluation should properly set the *Piano Sonata* among the best contemporary works that have been written in that form.

ARTHUR BERGER

Legarde S. Doughty

RADIO, DEEP SOUTH

Grubber wets last-quarter moon with rimy look.
Mist is soft on leafmold, leafmold soft on sand.
Quiet as priestly touch on tufted altar-book,
Saint-eyed ox comes snuffing up to grubber's hand.
Late couchant in scrub cover, scarlet under pines,
Noble beast knows tang of salt in grubber's palm;
Laps blubber tongue most deftly along turbid lines.
This is man, beast, soil. This is foundation, farm.

They lead the daylight on a halter, maybe three
Dark hours long. The man thinks of what came across
Great seas to him last night on curls of energy:
News of the war; confusing brags of gain and loss;
And something about how millions of men were trying to take
Places with names too curious for him to call.
What men? what cause? what purposes? and for whose sake?
His plow, an acre or two, this sombre animal,
These are possessions, all that one could well possess.
Such could they take from him (he mulls), besides his shoes.

O faithful ox! O chattel, solemn, sweet! O less!
Things are precarious. You have but life to lose.

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English Poetry and the War

Alex Comfort

IT TAKES up to three months for PARTISAN REVIEW or any other American periodical to reach us here, even when the submarines permit. Accordingly the picture which one gets of American poetry in wartime is fragmentary. Anything may come up, from a few rather striking poems by Shapiro, reminding one of our own Laurie Lee, or a little more MacLeish or Delmore Schwartz, to a small flower-show by Harold Vinal. All these elements which the Atlantic disgorges for us are discontinuous. It is hard to form a coherent picture of the trends in poetry since war broke out (American magazines, especially artistic and literary ones, are fantastically costly here) and harder still to assess the fragments which reach us.

But I should imagine that the young American poet has to face very much the same position as the Englishman, being pulled all ways at once by influences which are trying to drive him into interpretation. We have our own Van Wyck Brookses. The drive against modern trends in writing is far less intense than we anticipated—it was, in fact, a good deal fiercer during the Auden period, and even today the press, reduced to a single folded sheet, attacks Auden or even Eliot by name when it is looking for an intellectual to denounce. But unlike the Brooks campaign, our own is to some extent internecine. There has been the clamour for war poetry, coming not from the middle-class public, which is too stunned to clamour for anything, but from those border-line literary journals like "John o' London's Weekly" which continue to publish Georgian poetry. But added to that there has been a considerable amount of quarrelling, friendly or otherwise, between men of genuine literary standing, which is threatening to constitute two rival groups, a classical and a romantic. In addition to this, the classical group is tending to become identified with socialism (it has repudiated Communism) and the prosecution of the war, and the romantic with anarchism, which is quite strong, pacifism, which is even stronger, among the youngest poets, and a frame of mind which one can only term Nihilism, although it bears little relation to the pre-Revolutionary Russian doctrine of that name. It may seem from a distance that divisions of this sort are very little more significant than the usual wrangling of literary men at any time, but they are acquiring an importance in view of the literary situation which has arisen in France, because they parallel it to a very close degree.

The youngest poets are really facing a tripartite attack—from the press and the Georgians, (some of these have been incredibly plodding along, waiting for the tide to turn against technical and conceptual innova-

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tions towards what they call "the old music," and the literary discomfiture of the innovators pleases them very much) whose line is briefly a demand that the young poets should become the literary propagandists of the war, devote themselves to the study of Brooke, and write choric odes to the Air Force, the Ideal of Liberty, and what have you: from a better informed section of political opinion, whose case was admirably stated in that letter of Orwell's in your March-April issue, and which charges them with being anti-war (which is true) and objectively pro-Fascist (which I think is not): and from a third body of serious and intelligent literary criticism which denounces the intellectual imprecision of the romanticism which they are adopting.

One can dismiss the first prong of the attack fairly rapidly, as its influence on verse has been small, and apart from a few books by well-meaning Service men such as Richard Elwes, little that can be equated with the pro-war verse of 1914 has reached print. One should except a remarkably able and forcible book of revolutionary war verse by David Martin, which has sold 4,000 copies in a very short while, a remarkable figure at present. One of the journalist writers who used, I believe, to appear in Lehmann's *New Writing*, John Pudney, has produced a book of Air Force poems which appeared originally on the middle pages of a London daily, and which were much publicized by the B.B.C. Miss Patience Strong, a rather more virulent version of Miss Duer Miller, still sells in enormous quantities, and her verse invades poker-work screens and kalendars, although these are becoming scarcer in common with other "non-essentials."

In contrast to all this undergrowth, there is a far larger volume of genuinely competent work being written than we have had for many years. Poets like Stephen Spender, Francis Scarfe, and Dylan Thomas continue to publish books at intervals. The last year has seen two major newcomers in Vernon Watkins and Henry Treece. Nicholas Moore has written no less than four books of verse in nine months. There is an enormous growth of small pamphlets and anthology-collections of three or four poets.

In *The Listener*, the propaganda-literary magazine of the British Broadcasting Company, a few months ago, we had the first inkling of the intentions of the Brooks faction. (Brooks of course has nothing to do with it, in this country. I borrow his name because there is no Englishman on whom one can really pin the tendency at present.) A correspondence was opened on the lines of the "Treason of the Clerks," ranging from intelligent statements, that there was poetic scope for the interpretation of the events of the war, to personal abuse and quite incredibly silly allegations of decadence among the young. The most sensible and polite statement came from G. Rostrevor Hamilton, a traditionalist poet who had previously published a book of patriotic verse: he amplified his charges later in *Horizon* as follows:

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"Several statements I have seen . . . tend to set up the attitudes roughly indicated in column II below against those indicated in column I:

I	II
Patriotism	Ideology (as a substitute for patriotism)
Will to Victory	Defeatism
Hope for a new order (plenty of room for ideologies here)	Cynicism or hopelessness
Concern with good and evil (primarily moral)	Concern with clinical value, health, neurosis, and therapy (primarily scientific)
or with good, sin and redemption (primarily religious)	

"The case in favour of column I against column II . . . ought to speak conclusively for itself, and does so for 'the majority of Englishmen.' It is a pitiable delusion for a few among the intellectuals (blessed word) to suggest otherwise."

Not long afterwards, the Saturday columnist and essay-writer Robert Lynd wrote in *John o' London's* asking why nothing like the "Prisoner of Chillon" had yet been written, and was demolished pretty effectively in the next issue by Nicholas Moore. At the same time, on a very different plane, we have the sorrow of Mr. Orwell over the unwillingness of the young not to interpret, but to participate in, the war. In his article I think Mr. Orwell understated this unwillingness. Of the hundred odd younger poets in England now, about half, including Nicholas Moore, Robert Greacen, Peter Wells, Derek Savage and many others, are explicitly pacifist and have refused military service; the other, and, with exceptions, perhaps the more talented half are in the army or air force, for a multiplicity of reasons, because they feel that their vision would be crippled by standing aside from experience, or because the wish to "explore death" and so forth, but never because of any enthusiasm to beat Germany or reconstruct Europe. I think I have yet to meet the "intellectual" English army officer who had any personal concern in the war.

It is very important that this state of mind should be realised if one is to comprehend the nature of the attempts at interpretative war poetry which have been made. These attempts have been genuine, sensitive, and successful. Their recognition by English critics has been scant. When the book of Aragon's beautiful poems on the Fall of France reached this country, I was impressed by the fact that we were working in spite of our isolation on parallel lines.

The first large-scale attempt to combine interpretation with an appeal to the public was remarkably successful in its sales, but not fully representative of the field. It was entitled *Poems from the Forces* and came out last year under the editorship of Keidrych Rhys. It was the aggressive diffidence of the work in it which struck one most. The war as these poets (all conscripts) have seen it resolved itself into

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i. A period of unutterable boredom under Chamberlain
ii. The air raids on England
iii. The first part of a period of embittered disillusion which varies from writer to writer between the desire to get out of the army and the desire to see the Conservative party win just one battle.

Technically much that is in it is skillful. The contributors are an anomalous body which no other circumstance could have united in one book—G. S. Fraser, Laurence Whistler, Heppenstall, Alun Lewis—and superimposed upon them writers like Christopher Hassall, who is being privately tipped for poet laureate, and some miscellaneous traditionalists. Rhys himself added a fighting preface, answering the question, "Where are your war poets?" with "Under your nose."

The two salient features of this anthology are its inexperience of real war, such as Owen and Sorley knew (there is a disappointment, almost, in this) and a total absence of any suggestion of struggle. War is a duty, not a struggle. There is no enemy. The synthesis of Spender's "Armies at Night"—"as if those enemies slept in each others' arms"—is continuous into the daytime also. This is not all the war, but it is a part of it. One can imagine how much verse like this the American conscripts will write, in training a long way from the guns, separated from their work, their girls, and everything which makes life worth while, under the shadow of the imminent massacre. You and we are undergoing the misery of military duty which is unfamiliar to us, its wastefulness, its rigidity, its squalor. But this is not the element in the war which is most amenable to poetic interpretation. If there is a factor in this war which is accented, which is more than in past wars, it is the tragedy of the ordinary man.

We have that interpretation in England, as Aragon in France. The approach of the poet has varied. It may be the explicit statement of his own circumstances, that reads like a letter to his wife, as in the poems of Rhys and Alun Lewis. Or it may be performed imaginatively by a poet standing outside the war, but seeing in his own small pleasures an image of the calamity of everyone, making himself a Christ figure for the world, as Nicholas Moore does. Again, though nobody has tried it, it might come through the comprehensive poem, the map of sorrow, such as Auden's "Spain."

Among the English writers, Moore and Lewis and Fraser are outstanding. Henry Treece who is possibly the best of all the younger poets, has so far transcended the war in the exploration of the internal struggle in his own mental landscape, his "Personal Armaggedon" that it is his technique and outlook rather than his actual work which have come to influence our "war" poetry.

There is no space to quote all these writers, and I only introduce them to bolster a case, and not to produce a catalog of personal taste. I require to be armed with them, as some sort of token of the line which the interpretation of the war is taking in England, before I refer to the last criticism—I will not call it an attack—which has been made, on the general

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approach of the youngest poets to the war. This came from Spender in *Horizon*, attached to a magisterial review of the year's verse. He said:

> "No poet has created in imaginative terms (1) any major event of the war (2) any statement of the nature of the struggle in which we are involved, either as suffering or as ideas (3) any positive faith in the democracy for which we are fighting (4) any effective statement against war."

I require to be fortified with the positive side of poetic achievement in this direction before admitting the truth of much of this. I replied to him at the time that (1) was neither desirable nor feasible except in prose, that (3) was conducive to bad verse, and that (2) and (4) had been fairly successfully attempted. One must say "fairly," because of the inherent difficulties: firstly, only the lost poets in Libya have any experience of fighting, secondly, because during the Auden epoch the new exploitation of image and sound play led to a neglect of metrical technic, which, until the advent of Treece, made a long work impossible; thirdly, because in the present frame of mind in this country, effective dissociation from the national neurosis is almost as impossible as you in America must be finding it, and fourthly because of the inability of the writers in the forces to devote time to slowly elaborated work. Beyond that, one cannot answer. It becomes a matter of taste.

The figure in English writing around whom the greatest part of our new romantic movement revolves is undoubtedly Herbert Read, into whose influence Spender, in his own slow progress into Romanticism, is being drawn. Read has described the spirit of contemporary English verse as pacifist, in the sense that it has abandoned the idea of war as a struggle, and has come to see it as a calamity which one must regard as one regards the storms. That will imply a withdrawal from any expectation that verse written now, like the verse of the thirties, can reasonably expect to exert an immediate social influence. The isolation of England into a dolls' house full of unreal governments and real fears will contribute to a de-socializing of poetry. I mention all these factors because I feel that the same process in America is delayed only by the time lag of her entry into the Churchillian circus. It would be very profitable if one could spend the last two years of English literature over again, equipped with foreknowledge of its direction. That, it seems to me, is an opportunity which American criticism has before it. You will sit through the show a second time round. And if the fragments of English poetry which the sea throws up are as discontinuous as those of American poetry which arrive here, some such prelude as I have written, a scaffolding in which to put them, may possibly prove useful to act as a program, a card of the game we have played and you will be playing.

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Books

The Native Critic

ON NATIVE GROUNDS: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature. By Alfred Kazin. Reynal and Hitchcock. $3.50.

"The greatest single fact about our modern American writing," Mr. Kazin says in his introduction, is "our writers' absorption in every last detail of their American world together with their deep and subtle alienation from it." I do not know that the alienation has been very subtle; but otherwise the statement seems to me true and enlightening. And it applies to the native critic as well as to the native novelist and poet. To the critic in fact it may even apply in a double sense. With Europe's better developed culture as a standard, he sometimes feels estranged not only from America at large but from much of its literature. The critic is like those heroes of Silone or Graham Greene who are fugitives both from the world in general and from their own unpopular sects. I do not mean that imaginative writers are not also conscious of European literature or that the creative and the critical faculties are not sometimes combined in the same writer, but only that the critic as critic is necessarily more preoccupied with comparative values in literature. Nobody likes the sterile isolation and self-pity which often go with this situation. And critics have more and more been occupying themselves with intensive studies in American culture which might serve them as a bridge back to the literature and the people. But even the friendliest intentions cannot wipe out the still palpable discrepancy between America's greatness, considered both quantitatively and as a human spectacle, and the manifest incompleteness of her literary achievement. Some awareness of the discrepancy continues to be latent, I think, in even the most passionately affirmative of these cultural studies. The fervent literary archeology, the artificial attempts to rehabilitate old reputations and unearth buried masters, the very special poignancy of tone and overdramatization of our literary history, above all the frank substitution of merely local standards for international ones—all this originates, I believe, in the felt need to compensate for radical deficiencies in the literature itself. Van Wyck Brooks, for example, is clearly not writing about American books and authors: he is invoking some transcendent national promise, some American Creative Spirit, which to him exists quite apart from any of its actual manifestations in American writing.

In certain respects Alfred Kazin's fine history of recent American prose belongs to the tradition of these cultural studies. It too is detailed and scholarly, energetically inquisitive and exploratory. It too is occasionally guilty of the consolatory rhetoric and overdramatization. *On Native Grounds* seems to me, however, to be the best of all these studies that I have read (I have not read Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* for example), and altogether a remarkable achievement. Brook's fairy-

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book charm is not in Mr. Kazin, whose virtues are rather wit, exuberance and an extraordinary aptness for dramatic exposition. He does not try to transform our attitudes towards the period he writes about, as Brooks did in connection with the New England period. The writers of the 20s, for example, are evaluated substantially as they were in the symposium, *After the Genteel Tradition* (1937). Yet though *On Native Grounds* is chiefly notable as a chronicle of recent literature it is nevertheless studded with fresh emphases and perceptions. Some particularly good passages that occur to me at random are the discussion of Veblen's oddly formal style in connection with his self-consciousness as an immigrant's son; the account of Ludwig Lewisohn's peculiar abilities and dilemmas; the structural analysis of *U. S. A.*; the account of the influence of the camera on the sensibility of the 30s; the explanation of Faulkner's grand incoherence as an effect of his unclarified relation to the Southern community.

I want to question, however, some of Mr. Kazin's arrangements in the book. It seems to me that the long introductory chapters on Howells and the Muckrakers contain little that is new and might better have been summarized. Similarly, aren't the denunciations of Cabell and Hergeshiemer spun out to lengths unjustified by those writers' present reputations? I feel that all these pages, admirable as they are, ought to have been devoted to poetry and drama, which Mr. Kazin excludes from his study on grounds of convenience. In a book which is, despite his disclaimers, really a history of the modern American mind (the literary mind, at any rate), the absence of any treatment of these two arts is a serious disadvantage. To mention only one example of the difficulty which results: the so-called "lost generation" mentality is duly analyzed by Mr. Kazin, but what of the so-called "wasteland" mentality which in many ways ran counter to it and which expressed itself chiefly in verse?

Poetry gets into Mr. Kazin's study principally through a discussion of those critics who have specialized in the analysis of it, the "Formalists" as Mr. Kazin calls them. But I question whether justice can be done these writers when no attention is given to the medium they worked on, or to its very special importance as a discipline and *via vitae* in recent literary experience. These critics are discussed in an eloquent and controversial chapter called "Criticism at the Poles," the contention being that, in obedience to the social crisis of the 30s, criticism rushed to two opposite extremes, one of heedless estheticism the other of crudely urgent sociology. This is true enough as a formula, but in the application of it Mr. Kazin takes such an extreme view of the sins of both schools, judges each of them so exclusively in terms borrowed from the other, that he ends by merely exacerbating the "polarity." (The very word "Formalist" which Mr. Kazin uses of the poetry critics was the Marxists' somewhat opprobrious term for them.) So both groups are left classified not according to their actual achievement in illuminating literature for

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us, but according merely to their announced programs and more extravagant statements—which is just the way they so often classified each other!

And I wish that Mr. Kazin had brought into his book more of the historical spirit of those social critics whom he deplores. One enjoys his volume for its insights into single authors or groups of authors rather than for any continuous clarification of the literary situation in America. The strong impression of continuity and synthesis which the book gives forth seems to originate chiefly in the all-enveloping energy of Mr. Kazin's approach. And one is left at the end with a number of queries, including some rather leading ones: whether for example literary nationalism, even our own relatively innocent literary nationalism, is an adequate basis for significant literature in our time, as Mr. Kazin's concluding chapter seems to imply. Indeed *On Native Grounds* is a triumph not so much of fundamental historical penetration as of great good sense and good will. It is written in a generous spirit which, I take it, Mr. Kazin conceives to be appropriate to the America that has always been celebrated by writers in the Jeffersonian line and that is being celebrated today in connection with the War. But his shrewd and responsible critical faculty works to keep him from the radiant mysticism of many literary Jeffersonians. And thus he has attained a kind of temperamental adjustment by virtue of which he, at least, need not feel himself a fugitive.

F. W. DUPEE

Yeats and His Ireland

W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939. By Joseph Hone. The Macmillan Company. $6.00.

The official biographer of Yeats—long-lived, multiple-careered man of genius—had a task on his hands requiring more than ordinary tact and skill. Joseph Hone has skirted the larger controversial questions while managing to state them more or less openly. Persons involved are still alive; the smoke screens the poet was fond of creating still distort, if they do not actually hide, certain crucial instances. Yeats was, among other things, a consummate actor; of this fact his biographer is quite aware. Hone sometimes dryly pierces through an ambiguity of one sort or another, in a casual footnote. This remarkably full record cannot fail to be a corrective to those either muddled or starry-eyed on the subjects of Ireland, Yeats, or the Celtic Revival. To the informed and detached student it should be a stimulant.

Yeats' "Autobiography" covers his early life rather fully, but breaks off after the death of Synge. Formerly, the middle and later years had to be pieced together from scattered notes, prefaces and essays. Now even the early years are filled in with new material. More light is thrown on "the aristocratic and critical Nationalism" Yeats learned from O'Leary; on Maude Gonne; on Yeats' struggles to free Irish literature from the

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sterile political vein into which the events of the 19th century (and earlier) had forced it. "To create an heroic and passionate conception of life and to make that conception the special dream of the Irish people" was his aim. Creating an Irish theatre was a means to that end. His work with Lady Gregory, Moore, etc., culminating in the Abbey Theatre (at first subsidized by an Englishwoman, Miss Horniman) was a de-Anglicizing movement, like the Gaelic League headed by Douglas Hyde. But it was never a political movement, and Yeats' efforts did not strike the popular imagination as did Hyde's in those early years. After ten years work, the *Playboy* riots occurred, in 1907. For a week Yeats faced howling audiences in almost physical battle.

The fight for Synge's plays proved, however, Yeats' mettle, even to his worst enemies, his jealous detractors, and those fanatical Nationalists, who during that week, turned against him to a man. No later cossetting by Lady Gregory or others, not even the pension later granted him by the English Government, could wipe out the memory of the poet fighting for his artistic principles and those of his friend, with his back against the wall. Charges of affectation, aestheticism and physical cowardice were thereafter meaningless. And Synge's influence had a larger part in changing Yeats' early style than is generally supposed. The embroideries began to fade out. Yeats came down to earth, gaining the energy and force observable in the bitter satires of the middle years. When he began, around 1912, to write dance plays to be produced in London drawing-rooms (leaving the Abbey to the peasant comedies its audiences then understood and enjoyed) his writing did not thin out, but showed a new fusion of dramatic with lyric power. Slowly, and always urged on by events (the constraining appositeness of which demonstrated, to Yeats, the working of his destiny and his Daemon) he moved toward the larger arena, the more profound insight, and those themes adequate to his inexhaustible and "restless" mind.

The 1914 War and the Easter Rising (1916) put an end to a period of rather undisciplined thinking and emotion. The Civil War in Ireland, after 1919, again directed him toward more ruthless and intense work. Ireland, too, was changing.

> "When a country produces a man of genius, he is never what it wants or believes it wants. . . . Ireland, since the Young Irelanders, has given itself up to apologetics. Every impression of life or impulse of imagination has been examined to see if it helped or hurt the glory of Ireland or the political claim of Ireland. A sincere impression of life became at last impossible, all was apologetics. There was no longer an impartial imagination, delighting in whatever is naturally exciting. Synge was the rushing up of the buried fire, an explosion of all that had been denied or refused, a furious impartiality, an indifferent turbulent sorrow. His work . . . was to say all that people did not want to have said. He was able to do this because Nature had made him incapable of a political idea. . . ."

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This passage, written in 1909, contains a theme Yeats elaborated bitterly, over and over, in prose and verse. His role, he realized, was like and yet unlike Synge's. He was a fanatic, a passionate artist, confronting fanatics. He was, as well, a shrewd practical man. "The demagogic virtues bound up with logic" were English virtues, bred from the 19th century. Irishmen had passed from "the old half-mediaeval peasantry into an agrarian political party"; and now the countryman's culture was passing into the frame of the petty bourgeois: the suburban frame of mind. (See Joyce's "Dubliners" and "Portrait of the Artist" for a realistic picture of this process.) Anyone who sentimentalizes the Irish character must miss an understanding of Yeats' later role both as poet and public figure.

The role which came into being consciously or subconsciously was unmistakably that of the shaman. Yeats was creating a myth, and ritually taking part in his creation. Breaking the taboos brought, in some measure, the symbolic guilt upon himself. The awakening of an heroic Irish spirit came more quickly than he expected and in a form that he did not foresee. It lead to action: it is certain that at least half of the leaders of the Easter Rising were steeped in the legendary glories, revived by Yeats, of their country and race. And, finally, it lead to a civilized point of view; the Abbey Theatre, after the passage of years, presented fantasy and satire to an audience now capable of understanding and enjoyment. After a Government was set up, following the Civil War, Yeats became a Senator and found another task before him: to reconcile the Catholic Irish, now in the ascendancy, to the virtues of the Anglo-Irish tradition. This task he also brought to partial success, through his praise of Berkeley, Swift, Grattan, Burke and Goldsmith.

How far he was taken in by his shaman role, it is not yet possible to judge. The period of "the Unknown Instructors" which came upon him after his marriage, made him and his wife co-mediums, and is set forth in "A Vision," is a period difficult for the skeptical uninstructed to accept. His worst side, which included credulity and self-deceiving dramatization, here reappears, brought over from his youth. Yet some magnificent poetry belongs to this time; and "The Vision" includes a lot of sound common sense, along with its Cabalistic jargon. This desire to tinker with the universe, to hold up the laws of nature for his own pleasure, was Yeats' least admirable occupation, as Stephen Spender has said. The whole question of Yeats' occultism will attract the attention of psychologists in the future.

He could lash out at Ireland because he loved it, and understood the special pride born of humiliation behind Irish bitterness. "If W. B. were in the Gobi desert and someone mentioned Ireland," Stephen MacKenna once remarked, "he would be all aquiver." He fought censorship in the Free State, and has been called a "fascist" for his pains. He considered humanitarianism a sort of neurosis native to the middle

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class mind. "Abstract, isolated minds" he called Shaw, Moore and Wilde, "without memory or landscape."

Being a man for whom, to misquote Gautier, the invisible world existed, he pushed his inquiries in the supernatural to their limits; most often in a critical way. He remained inexorably pitted (and this stand may in the future count as a major part of his greatness) against that genteel and semi-genteel section of the public, without passion or intellectual interests, from which rise, and to which appeal, the savage and hollow ideas of our day. His life and biography raise as many questions as they solve. But they convince us, as Eliot said at the memorial service in Dublin, that "[Yeats] was one of those few whose history is the history of our time, who are part of the consciousness of their age, which cannot be understood without them."

LOUISE BOGAN

The Wit of Objects

Person, Place and Thing. By Karl Jay Shapiro. Reynal & Hitchcock. $2.00.

It is not easy to describe the mixture of impatience and pleasure that I feel in reading these poems; and there is a special impediment, or scruple, having to do with the fact that they were not selected or edited by the author. I believe the book would be stronger and would have lost nothing if at least a dozen poems had been omitted. Whether through hyperesthesia or not, I cannot take more than a certain measure of the Audenesque in the verse of other contemporaries, a measure definitely exceeded in Shapiro's *Love Poem* and elsewhere.

> *. . . With sometimes spastic hate could foil*
> *Her sister's husband and her mother's ulcer.*
> *Called for in sealed and guarded cars could flee*
> *Like wit across theatrical frontiers . . .*

There you have not only the manner but some of the medical and political properties of the English writer, and all poorly handled. At other points the poem rises to its own tone, fit for its own subject, but the hand-me-down fashion is fatal to it as a whole. There are other poems whose sardonic turn and unfinicking dextrous metres remind me of MacNeice's verse; but in this case there seems to have been less an "influence" than a native likeness of temper. *Buick* and *Haircut*, in this vein, are overwhelmingly Shapiro, and they are, I suppose, the happiest poems yet turned out on their respective themes, e.g.:

> *You leap, you intelligence, essence of wheelness with silvery nose,*
> *And your platinum clocks of excitement stir like the hairs of a fern . . .*

Other interesting—and disciplined—work is to be found in several set pieces including those on the University of Virginia, the National Cathedral at Washington, Hollywood, etc. In these poems he manages to

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sustain both structure and rhetoric toward a tolerable unity of effect and, what is more, an amplitude of statement. It is astonishing how infrequently we get this quality, in verse on such national subjects, or at least how infrequently it comes clear of some kind of cheapness. Shapiro's worked-out visions of Jefferson's classic college, sad with young snobbery, of the stony white summer ache and magnificence of Washington, of Hollywood ("What is more nearly ours?") seem to me of more than topical intensity and value. There is a tension in them, correctly adjusted, between the direct, astringent pathos that suffices for his good poem on moving day in New York and the heavily loaded, stunting imagery of poems like *Waitress* and *Honkytonk*, which I find more barren than amusing.

Shapiro's wit, which as Mr. Van Doren has noticed "never fails him," is in itself something to be thankful for, and I do not mean to invoke any misplaced austerity about it. I merely observe that it would have been better if it *had* failed him at times. Serious poetry weds invention to formal excellence and to those marks of reserve that we call taste. Deficiencies in both are fairly common in this book, as you can see by comparing some of Shapiro's wittiest verse with his best poem, *The Twins*:

Sisters kiss freely and unsubtle friends
Wrestle like lovers; brothers loudly laugh:
These in a dreamier bondage dare not touch.
Each is the other's soul and hears too much
The heartbeat of the other . . .

He has kept the whole thing firmly under control, and given his perception that autonomy which is the truth of art.

ROBERT FITZGERALD

Verse Drama, of a Sort

The Revolutionists. By Selden Rodman, Illustrated by Rudolph C. von Ripper. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. $2.75.

This book is advertised as follows on the dust cover:

"*The Revolutionists* is in the great tradition of verse plays. Its subject is the revolt of the slaves of Haiti. Here, compact of place and time, is the drama of every violent revolution: the decay of the old order, the brutality of the masters, the triumph of clever leaders, tyranny and terrorism, the struggles of the revolutionists among themselves." Remarks on dust covers are notoriously silly, but in this case the blurb is true to the spirit of the work. Mr. Rodman was apparently trying to make a poetic drama out of a chunk of history more complicated than what Shakespeare used for *Julius Caesar*, with more wars and rumors of wars than went to the making of *Coriolanus*. He has taken not one but four

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revolutionary leaders for his protagonists, not one political issue but a score of them. The masters versus the slaves, the blacks versus the whites, the mulattoes against both colors, France against Haiti, Spain against France, and for good measure the impact of the French Revolution in several of its phases upon Haiti and *its* revolution—these are some of the conflicts Mr. Rodman found in the history books, and tried to transfer to the stage. The task was beyond his strength. He does not even succeed in presenting an intelligible narrative, and as for any sort of dramatic or poetic unity, that is a mystery which he is not even aware of. The characters are all lay figures, quite lifeless. They speak a kind of blank verse which adds to the effect of woodenness. It should be evident, after the experiences of Auden (who can, of course, write verse), that writing in verse does not make poetic drama. The problem is to digest the subject to the point where it can be conceived poetically, and then it is unimportant whether it is written in verse or prose.

I cannot tell what Mr. Rodman was counting on to "put across" this play. Perhaps he thought that the events themselves, if they could be conveyed somehow in dialogue, would be enough to hold the interest of an audience. In any case, he maintains an air of the utmost confidence; and between the scenes, speaking as breathless chorus or delighted showman, he addresses us in galloping doggerel:

> Dear Reader: to relieve the strain
> Of reading what in action's plain,
> And to avoid the flat description
> Of usual Stage Direction diction
> This letter will supply in rhyme
> Such things as color, place and time,
> Action, and some biography,
> History and geography. . . .

This is not interesting verse. But its manner is reassuring, and its enthusiasm is rather infectious, like that of a boy's history of the conquest of Peru. It is much closer than drama to what Mr. Rodman can do. I am sorry he tried for a Tragedy in three acts, instead of contenting himself with a versified narrative in this youthful vein, good-natured, pleased with itself, sounding off now and then with a vaguely portentous cliché. I quote from the last of these "verse letters":

> The Black dictator builds himself
> His prison on the topmost shelf
> Of mountains: a stupendous fort,
> A Black man's permanent retort
> To White vainglory; but a tomb
> Whose forced construction signs his doom.
> THE TYRANT OF A LATER AGE
> WILL ALSO BUILD HIMSELF A CAGE
> UPON ANOTHER NATURAL STEEPLE
> TO INSULATE HIM FROM THE PEOPLE;
> FROM WHICH, IN SOLITARY GUILT,
> THE INHUMAN "ORDER" HE HAS BUILT

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IN GOD-DELUSION STILL MORE RASH,
WILL PRESENTLY BE SEEN TO CRASH. . . .
The car of consequence, Dear Reader,
Without recourse to coupled meter,
From here, should travel like a shell.
This letter is complete. Farewell.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

Letters

COUNTER-SYMPOSIUM

1

Sirs:

The academic triptych of Hook-Dewey-Nagel in *Partisan Review* evades focus, at first. Each appears to be occupied in expressing a typical 19th Century response to an atypical challenge, that is, the response that Epicurus and Lucretius charted and which was brought, in principle, to complete competence in the empirico-metrical techniques of the 19th Century. But this is a false reading. The whole action is more sensitive. . . .

Actually, each is offering a prayer—in the confessional form of *non possum*—to petition for a way through the present painful sense of drift. They are saying, and they are philosophers, that philosophers have lost their functions and don't know where to find them. Trying to remember where philosophers last had them seems not to work. As Marx observes (*Capital*, p. 384, Mod. Lib. ed.): "If it (*scil.* Manufacture: competitive selection) develops a one-sided specialty into a perfection, at the expense of the whole of a man's working capacity, it also begins to make a specialty of the absence of all development."

Mr. Nagel appears to be fingering a scratch from that claw. He observes: "Professional scientists have frequently used their specialized knowledge to buttress or criticize the institutions of their day; but publicists, religious leaders, and philosophers (*sic!*) have usually played a more prominent role in this task of evaluating the general social import of scientific methods and scientific theories. Such evaluations do not, in most cases, flow from the specific character of scientific methods or their technical achievements. . . ." Mr. Nagel is quite correct. The philosopher in his present incarnation is not a person possessed of the specific skills and techniques, the 'technical achievements,' of the chemist, mathematician, physicist, etc. However, Messers Hook, Dewey and Nagel insist that science is to be evaluated by scientific methods, that is, specific skills and routines. If so, the philosopher in his evaluating role has no proper and intrinsic function *qua* philosopher. Scientists who do possess proper and intrinsic functions have been pointing this out for some time.

Mr. Nagel, in effect, is saying that though philosophers do not produce science in its neutral sense, they do serve to distribute it in an exhortatory way. Theirs is the pseudo-function of writing advertising copy for the scientific industries.

What offers an imitation in place of the operation itself must go, doubtless, as the triptych says in unison. It is sad, though. In the strictly functional universities of post-war reconstruction, somehow we shall miss the philosophers, the myth-makers, as somehow we know that we miss wisdom. However, a confessional mood is an attitude of invitation if it is not an attitude of answer. Perhaps the City will come later.

ERASMUS MINOR

NEW YORK CITY

2

Sirs:

Here are a few questions on "The New Failure of Nerve" as described in your last issue.

1. If, as Sidney Hook and John Dewey both suggest, the cause of present disorders is more probably a lack than an excess of scientific method in approaching social problems, what in turn is the cause

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of that? If, as Sidney Hook says, "attempts to grapple with these problems . . . *in a rational and scientific spirit* have run squarely against class interests and privileges which cut savagely short any inquiry into their justification," could it be that the preliminary reasoning had been defective in its estimate of such facts? Can all that has been found somewhat intractable to scientific method be described as "class interests and privileges"?

2. Is it a "sign of intellectual panic," in Sidney Hook's phrase, to raise such questions as these? Is it good reasoning, or scrupulous with respect to fact, to identify those who do raise them with those many who are indeed likely to lose their wits in a dangerous time?

3. Has "*the recrudescence of beliefs in* the original depravity of human nature," mentioned by Sidney Hook, actually been as noticeable as the correction of beliefs in the speedy perfectability of human nature? And for this correction has not a certain body of scientific evidence been amassed? . . .

Yours,
ROBERT FITZGERALD

NEW YORK CITY

3

Sirs:

Henry Adams said that "the mind resorts to reason for want of training," and I find this curiously appropriate as applied to the articles by Sidney Hook, John Dewey and Ernest Nagel, in your current issue—curiously appropriate because one hardly expects trained intelligence to miss so completely the point of the religious idea. Religion is a way of thought, a way of life, personal and subjective, and not to be measured by "something whose existence we do not inwardly possess, but only point at outwardly." Why don't these gentlemen reread William James, "Varieties of Religions Experience," especially the chapter called "Conclusions"? If they have advanced since James' day and are able to contradict him, their objections and accusations should be more pertinent—many of the latter now seem obsolete. What is it that Mr. Dewey means when he says, ". . . the bloodiest and most cruel wars in human history were waged *in the name of and with the explicit* sanction of super-naturalism"—or Mr. Hook when he says, "Religious groups are seeking, as they always have, to make of God an instrument of national policy"? Are they not confusing religion, which is personal, with a behavior all too common to man in his social or collective activities? His belief in a church is one thing, his experience of God is another, and it would be well for their purpose of attack to make clear which of the two is meant. In a sense all concepts may be inter-related, but social, national or political ideas have less to do with religion than grammar has to do with poetry. It is all very like denying the existence of love because someone's marriage has failed. . . .

I repeat, religion is a way of life; a method of thinking; it is not dogma or theory; it is a realization—a more or less degree of mystical experience—and it is as much a function of the human mind and a capacity of man's as music is, or love. You cannot negate experience by scientific reasoning. If anyone thinks that a rope is a snake it is impossible to prove by logic that it is not; only by experiment can the truth be learned. So the sole test for experience is the effect it has, for better or worse, on a man's whole life.

Very truly yours,
E. S. SPACKMAN

NEW YORK CITY

4

Sirs:

What a depressing exhibition were the three articles on "The New Failure of Nerve" by Mssrs. Dewey, Nagle, and Hook; depressing because they demonstrate so eloquently the futility of mere argument in settling the deep-seated issues that circumstances have forced us to reanalyse after so long a philosophical slumber. These "naturalists" can't really be argued with, because at bottom they have not given themselves completely to the search for what is good for *man alone.*

The regimen of an experimental science

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dictates a toughness of mind which is impatient with irresponsible thought. So far, so good. At the real boundaries of philosophical enquiry, however, the "scientific" man loses interest and drops the argument. For him, the truth is to be arrived at either by irresponsible emotional means, or by the accumulation and corroboration of evidence. That a philosopher must enter on his search armed with two weapons, sympathy and precision, they are not capable of understanding. Plato, the philosopher-poet, the empirical analyst of the structure of life and art combined with the poet and enthusiast, they repudiate because he embarrasses them. In the presence of poetic enthusiasm, religious passion, no matter how sound its reasoned basis, they feel as uneasy as a child watching what it considers unduly amorous activity on the part of its parents.

The pressing problem is one of responsibility. Does science attempt to teach men their responsibilities towards one another? Does science delimit man's moral and spiritual nature so that he loses sight of the purpose of living in losing respect for himself? In other words, is science really concerned with making better men, or only with making more efficient men?

I hope that, after gloating fondly over their own pyrotechnics, Mssrs. Dewey, Hook, and Nagel read on in your magazine, especially the two poems of Kenneth Patchen. Patchen has stated the problem that they completely sidetracked. Why the evil, why the dirt, and why the lying? Above all, *why the lack of belief?* Scientific liberalism, as Eliot has said so eloquently so many times, has made us a neuter civilization. There is quality in the virtues that breed a science, but there seems to be little virtue in the world that science breeds. We do not want to be romantic and irresponsible, but *we will not be neuter.* We demand a faith, a God, and a conception of what makes a good man. Apologies to the giants of naturalism, but we are weak creatures and we need these things.

Sincerely,

ROBERT W. FLINT

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

REPLY BY MR. HOOK

Space permits only brief comment in reply to these letters. I shall take them in reverse order, with apologies for the appearance of dogmatism.

4. Mr. Flint demands "a faith, a God, and a conception of what makes a good man." He can find a conception of what makes a good man in naturalists from Democritus to Dewey and Santayana. But any attempt to derive a conception of the good man from theology is pure question-begging. A *demand* for faith? What can that mean? Faith is like intelligence; there is no sense in demanding it if you haven't got it. A demand for God? Why only for one? Why not demand, like the character in Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground,* that twice two cease being four? A child demands the moon, and although the moon exists we pronounce the demand unreasonable. But Mr. Flint doesn't even know that God exists. For as distinct from the moon, if God existed, he wouldn't demand Him. Mr. Flint says he doesn't want to be romantic and irresponsible but his words betray him. Isn't it barely possible that Mr. Flint demands what isn't there, and has faith in what simply isn't so?

Mr. Flint confuses science with scientific method and scientific method with special laboratory techniques. Science is not concerned with making either better men or more efficient men. The basic issue, of course, concealed by Mr. Flint's rhetorical questions about responsibility, is whether the "truth" of value judgments is to be determined by intuition, sacred revelation, or by scientific analyses of their causes and consequences in relation to the specific problems of evaluation.

3. Miss Spackman's reference to James shows that she misses the main point of the articles. They were directed primarily to religious doctrines and modes of belief that have mixed themselves up, directly and indirectly, in social and political affairs with claims to superior knowledge about nature, history and man. James' concern with some varieties of religious experience was in no way a quest for a social or political program based on "overbeliefs." The religious ex-

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perience is exclusively personal for him. Whether James' account does justice to the religious experience of most human beings, which is oriented towards dogma or doctrine as James' is not, is another question. Speaking for myself alone, I do not regard James' approach as a fruitful one in understanding either the religion or the religious experience of most of mankind. His own "overbeliefs" and "piecemeal supernaturalism" are incompatible both with the best strains of his Psychology and with the logic of pragmatism. When Miss Spackman tells us flatly that religion is not dogma or theory, she is wrong or else she is using words in a violently strange way. Nor have we fallen into the converse error of declaring that religion is *only* a matter of dogma or theory as she implies. Let Miss Spackman set her heart at rest. Naturalists have their experiences, too; they have no objection to other people having them. But two points must be mentioned here. (a) Although all sorts of cognitive claims may arise from experience or be based upon it, in the sense that the claim could not be made or understood without the experience, the *fact* of the experience is no evidence for the *truth* of the claims. And (b) an empirical approach towards religion furnishes even less warrant for the absolute dualism between religious experience and religious belief-action-institutions than, to use her own illustration, between love and marriage.

2. In answer to Mr. Fitzgerald's three questions. (1) We have not said that the cause of present disorders is "the lack of scientific method" in social affairs. We have said that the causes of our present disorders, including the new failure of nerve, is to be found primarily in a whole complex of *material* factors. See p. 8. The social, economic and educational changes required to eliminate these present disorders were not carried out for a variety of reasons. Only one of them is the antagonism of vested interests to the application of scientific method in resolving social problems in accordance with commonly professed goals. Another is the intrinsic difficulty of the problems which should be a spur to further scientific study and application instead of abandoning, as Mr. Fitzgerald's friends urge, incomplete knowledge for myths and superstition. Another is the failure of intelligence and courage of the two great wings of the socialist movement which should be a spur to reconstituting this movement fortified by the lessons of the past. And there are other reasons.

(2) No. Nor have we identified those who raise questions of this sort with people who exhibit intellectual panic..

(3) It is true that in addition to the revival of the doctrine of original sin, there has been a decline in the belief in "speedy perfectability of human nature." The latter is intelligent, a healthy reaction to the superficial optimism of the expanding capitalist economy in pre-War I days. After 1914 it was realized by many others besides Spengler that "optimism was cowardice." The doctrine of original sin, on the other hand, is a mischievous myth; it encourages indifferentism and defeatism.

1. Erasmus Minor misreads the passage he quotes from Mr. Nagel. It refers to the activities of *some* philosophers. He is also guilty of a *non-sequitur* in assuming that the evaluation of scientific method as opposed to other modes of settling doubt or fixing belief (Peirce), is to be carried on by "specific skills and routines," i.e., the special procedures of the individual sciences. Nor is the scientific evaluation of the methods of the sciences and their rivals and substitutes viciously circular if taken in the context of their respective claims.

The uses and functions of philosophy are many. Here are half a dozen which do not include "writing advertising copy" either for the scientific industries (or for God) or serving as the well-ridden handmaiden of theology. These functions are not exclusive or exhaustive.

a) imaginative anticipations and prefigurings of scientific discovery (e.g. evolution, relativity); also cosmological syntheses.

b) clarification of the basic categories of various disciplines.

c) logical analysis of language.

d) critique of abstractions in science, of values in social life.

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e) critique of religious and metaphysical obscurantisms.

f) Finally "the chief [not only] role of philosophy is to bring to consciousness, in an intellectualized form, or in the form of problems, the most important shocks and inherent troubles of complex and changing societies, since these have to do with conflict of values." (Dewey).

SIDNEY HOOK

A TRENCH DEFENDED

Sirs:

I hope you will not mind my telling you how much I have appreciated and been heartened by Sidney Hook's essay on *The New Failure of Nerve*: it bucks one up enormously to have things of this sort said, and said so cogently, in a period of such intellectual panic as ours. I am not very optimistic about the *immediate* future of a genuinely philosophic naturalism, but that it will come into its own eventually one can only doubt if one doubts that our culture will survive, and meanwhile not a single trench must be abandoned to the enemy. Essays like Hook's in the *Partisan* are as good as the gaining of an island or a railway center. How fortifying it is, too, to have Dewey return to the attack, at his age, with the wonderful spirit and freshness he displays in his essay! At such times, as Emerson said of Channing, we remember that he is our bishop, and that we have not done with him yet.

Yours sincerely,

NEWTON ARVIN

SMITH COLLEGE, NORTHAMPTON

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